HIMALAYAN AND TIBETAN IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

ETHNOLOGIA POLONA

CONTENTS

REVIEW

A R T I C L E S

HIMALAYAN AND TIBETAN
IDENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

RAFAŁ BESZTERDA & ANNA SZYMOSZYN

EDITORS

Western Himalayas and Tibet are specific areas, quite popular among scholars and intensively researched for over the last 150 years. It would seem that after such a long time we should know almost everything about the people and the region but such a vision could not be further from the truth. The Himalayas, best known for their natural beauty, are still a treasure trove for the representatives of various disciplines, from geologists, entomologists and botanists to cultural geographers, linguists, art historians, ethnographers and so on. Every year brings a plethora of new publications and even more importantly, a wider scope of original future prospects. More areas and topics of interest are opening than closing and it is what makes Himalayan studies so fascinating.

Culture is constantly on the move and these studies are no exception. It is beyond a question that the global world has already entered The Roof of the World. Satellite broadcast is reaching the villages together with sparkling sweet drinks and capped drinking water in a company of contemporary ideas, so called modern style of living and increased expectations. All of the above combination put enormous pressure on the local inhabitants, changing their vision of traditional values and the native economy in relation to the state and international market. Finally fundamental question of identity arises: local, regional and national. All particular dimensions of everyday life in the Western Himalayas show a huge dynamic of change and it is what provides the reason for permanent research being undertaken by both native and international scholars.

The time has come to cohesively gather together the several directions of Himalayan-Tibetan research conducted by scientists from Europe and India. In this volume of *Ethnologia Polona*, 4 Poles (Klafkowski, Bloch, Beszterda and Szymoszyn) together with Tsering Chorol from India, Gerald Kozicz from Austria and Bela Kelenyi from Hungary, present articles on their own investigations in various zones and regions in Ladakh, Zanskar, Kinnaur, Lahul&Spiti and among Tibetan and Himalayan

communities in India, Nepal and all over the world. A common thread running through these outcomes is the primary research being undertaken although their scope and specific interest is different.

As editors, we feel a great satisfaction that we were able to obtain competent authors and publish a volume on the area to which we devoted ourselves many years. When we both started work at the IAE PAS in middle 1990s., prof. Maria Paradowska, who was our principal and editor-in-chief of *Ethnologia Polona*, told us that it would be hard to realize our scientific ambitions due to a lack of interest in this area by academic and ministerial authorities, deciding on the allocation of funds. We paid our first research trips to Asia from our own money. It is only in the last decade that science funding policy has changed radically, and it is now much easier to obtain funds for fieldwork in remote parts of the world.

Professor Paradowska, however, was kind to us and agreed to our many month-long – stays in the Himalayas and Tibet and printed in *Ethnologia Polona* our first articles (Beszterda 2002, 55–83, Beszterda 2003, 131–148, Urbańska 2003, 149–165). In 2004, she agreed to devote part of the new volume to Himalayan-Tibetan issues. A group of young researchers published 6 articles on traditional trade routes in the Western Himalayas (Hinca 2004, 151–164), the medical activities of missionaries in North India (Beszterda 2004, 135–150), the revival of Bon religion in exile and in Poland (Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2004, 117–133), changes taking place in the environment of Tibetan youth in exile (Bloch 2004, 105–106) and the spread of Tibetan culture in Poland (Sanocki 2004, 87–104, Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2004, 79–86). In subsequent years, a further 3 only articles related to the region were published in *Ethnologia Polona* (Maksymowicz 2011, 165–180, Bloch 2011, 169–190, Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2013, 143–153).

We hope that the current volume, published 13 years after the first thematic Himalayan-Tibetan edition of *Ethnologia Polona*, will be very interesting for our readers and will bring a lot of new information and insights, despite this being a mere snapshot of the research conducted in so amazing part of the world.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B e s z t e r d a R. 2002. Moravians in Ladakh, Lahul and Kinnaur. *Ethnologia Polona* 23, 55–83.

B e s z t e r d a R. 2003. The Educational and School-Founding Activity of the Moravian Missionaries on the Indo-Tibetan Border. *Ethnologia Polona* 24, 131–148.

B e s z t e r d a R. 2004. The Medical Activity of the Moravian Missionaries in the Indian Himalayas (1853–1956). *Ethnologia Polona* 25, 135–150.

B l o c h N. 2004. The Impact of Changes in the Socio-Cultural Model of the Young Generation of Tibetan Refugees on Their National Attitude. *Ethnologia Polona* 25, 105–106.

B l o c h N. 2011. Between Vishnu and Mao Zedong: The Maoist Movement in Multi-ethnic Nepal. *Ethnologia Polona: Anthropology of Politics* 31–32 (2010–2011), 169–190.

H i n c a P. 2004. Traditional Basis of Trade in Western Himalayas. The Past and the Present. *Ethnologia Polona* 25, 151–164.

M a k s y m o w i c z N. 2011. Women in Himalayan Dolpo. *Ethnologia Polona: Gender and Queer Studies* 29–30 (2008–2009), 165–180.

S a n o c k i A. 2004. Manifestations of tibetan Culture in Poland. *Ethnologia Polona* 25, 87–104.

U r b a ń s k a A. 2003. Mount Kailas – Sacred Place and Symbolisation of the Sino-Tibetan Relations in the Context of the National-Religious Hermitage of Tibetans. *Ethnologia Polona* 24, 149–165.

U r b a ń s k a - S z y m o s z y n A. 2004. Festival of Tibetan Culture Called 'Tibet In Poznań'. *Ethnologia Polona* 25, 79–86.

U r b a ń s k a - S z y m o s z y n A. 2004. The Spreading of Bön Culture Among Tibetan Refugees. Polish Implications. *Ethnologia Polona* 25, 117–133.

U r b a ń s k a - S z y m o s z y n A. 2013. Political Determinants of Indian Pilgrimages to Mount Kailas and Manasarovar Lake. *Ethnologia Polona: Ethnopgraphy Re(dis)covered* 33–34 (2012–2013), 143–153.

REMARKS ON THE PRACTICE
OF INSTALLING LHATHOS OF TERRITORIAL
GUARDIANS INSIDE BUDDHIST TEMPLES
IN THE WESTERN HIMALAYAS

GERALD KOZICZ

INSTITUTE FOR ARCHITECTURE AND MEDIA
TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF GRAZ

A crucial factor for the successful establishment of Buddhism among Tibetan and Himalayan societies from the 10th century onwards was the integration of pre-Buddhist local myths into the art and architecture of the new doctrine. Depictions of territorial spiritual forces were incorporated into the Buddhist theological and iconographic systems, while *lhathos*, archaic chairns that were considered as seats of local guardians, became part of the specific architecture in the whole Himalayan landscape. The following article presents a few case-studies to describe the beginning of this phenomenon and discuss further developments. The specific interest is on the physical transfer of *lhathos* into orthodox Buddhist temples and their installation in eminent positions inside assembly halls or even inside main niches of a sanctum.

*   *   *

Kluczowym czynnikiem udanego wprowadzania buddyzmu w społeczeństwach tybetańskich i himalajskich począwszy od X wieku, było włączenie przed-buddyjskich lokalnych mitów do sztuki i architektury nowej doktryny. Przedstawienia terytorialnych sił duchowych zostały włączone do buddyjskich systemów teologicznych i ikonograficznych, podczas gdy *lhathos*, archaiczne siedziska bóstw, które były uważane za siedziby lokalnych strażników, stały się częścią architektury w całym krajobrazie himalajskim. Poniższy artykuł przedstawia kilka studiów przypadku, w celu opisania początków tego zjawiska oraz omawia dalszy jego rozwój. Szczególne zainteresowanie polega na fizycznym przeniesieniu *lhathos* do ortodoksyjnych świątyń buddyjskich i ich instalacji w zaszczytnych miejscach w halach zgromadzeń lub nawet w głównych niszach sanktuarium.

K e y w o r d s: Lhatho, Buddhism, Ladakh, Tibet, sacral architecture, Shang-Shung tradition, Rinchen Zangpo, Dorje Chenmo, deities.

INTRODUCTION[1]

Little is known so far about the early history of the Northwestern Himalaya region following the collapse of the Tibetan Empire and prior to the formation of the Buddhist Kingdom of Guge and Purang in the 10th century. Presumably, a variety of factors

[1] Research on this subject was made possible by a grant by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF Project 25475-G21). Noor Jahan Junka and Wajeeda Tabassum provided crucial support during the 2014 survey

were influential on the socio-cultural developments in the region, by that time known as Maryul and Ladakh. On the one hand, the valleys of the Indus and its tributaries had been integral parts of the trans-Himalayan trading routes and thereby remained in contact with the Buddhist kingdoms of Khotan, Brusha and Gilgit to its North and West as well as with neighboring Kashmir, where Buddhism was tolerated but Shaivism dominated. Since pilgrims and religious practitioners of all these religions travelled the same routes on their way to Mount Kailash in Western Tibet, then it would be fair to say that these regions had a remarkable religious and cultural impact on this part of the Himalayas. On the other hand, the geographic conditions had also been conducive for the continuing practice of local traditions based on cults rooted in the mighty pre-Buddhist kingdom of Shang Shung that had been annexed by the Tibetans in the 7ᵗʰ century – socio-cultural and religious milieu commonly referred to as Bön. The remoteness of side valleys and in particular the temporary inaccessibility of a vast portion of the region due to topographic and climatic constraints also provided the groundwork for non-orthodox Buddhist teachings that were condemned by orthodox followers of the Faith as heretic.

What followed the establishment of the political and military power of Guge and Purang over the region was an enormous endeavor that aimed at establishing an ortho-dox monastic Buddhist system. The ideological starting point was an edict by King Yeshe Ö [*Ye shes ʿOd*] particularly addressed to the heretics and aimed at erasing their practices within his dominion and unifying the society within a Buddhist socio-cultural system in 986 CE. This was followed by the foundation of the cruciform Main Temple in the capital Tholing, also known as the "Temple of Yeshe Ö", as the religious center of the dominion and the large-scale network of monastic edifices and temples that were to be built during this so-called Second Diffusion of the Faith (of Buddhism).

In the north-western part of their kingdom, the first step undertaken to estab-lish their socio-cultural and religious sovereignty was the foundation of the monastic center of Nyarma in Maryul, only a few kilometers south-east of Shey, the regional administrative center of that period. The architectural concept of the Main Temple of Tholing was not only the largest one but also the only one which exactly mirrored the mandala principles of the North-Indian stupa temples. All the other major edi-fices in the region under discussion were still based on the same geometric principles despite oblong-shaped plans[2]. At Tholing, the chapels of the five Tathagatas of the

[2] I discussed this subject on various occasions. For the geometric principles of the temples of Nyarma and the Indian models see Kozicz 2008–2009, 9–21, and for Tabo see Kozicz 2014, 70–75.

Vajradhatumandala formed not only the innermost sanctum of the temple but also the spiritual center of the whole dominion. Thereby, the ideal mandalic order of the Five-Family configuration was literally superimposed over the topography of the dominion. The mastermind – or in a way the supervising "architect" – behind this temple and also the construction of the large network of monastic institutions was Rinchen Zangpo [*Rin chen bzang po*], the "Great Translator"[3].

The Vajradhatumandala was undoubtedly the major subject ideologically, iconographically and also architecturally, that prevailed throughout the era of the Second Diffusion. Aside from its clear aim to adopt orthodox Buddhism of the early Vajrayana doctrine, the inclusion of local beliefs into the monastic system and teachings was also sought at the same time. The subjugation and appointment of local divinities and spirits as protectors of the faith (*dharmapala*) through binding them by an oath had already been a strategy during the tantric master Padmasambhava's times. Such a story was reported about the foundation of a temple by Rinchen Zangpo in his ancestral place, where some water spirits had to be subdued and turned into temple protectors[4].

Another act of integration of indigenous beliefs with Buddhism is related to the protectress Dorje Chenmo [*rDo rje chen mo*], the personal guardian deity of Rinchen Zangpo[5]. She is said to have been installed as both the protectress of Tholing and Nyarma (Vitali 1999, 24[6]). The major buildings were thereby linked not only through their architectural concepts, but also through this protectress[7]. As discussed by Christian Jahoda in his study on the tutelary deity of the Great Translator and her depictions in the temples of Tabo, Dorje Chenmo was amalgamated with Winyumyin, a local protector of the Tabo area, whose local cult Jahoda considers to predate the establishment of the Buddhist monastic complex (Jahoda 2006, 19–28). Even though historical data is not sufficient to allow Jahoda to reconstruct the process of amalgamation in detail, the concept behind it was clearly the incorporation of an earlier local cult

---

[3] Rinchen Zangpo is credited with the foundation of an auspicious number of 108 temples. Although there are standardized architectural rules that govern the design of a significant number of surveyed temples of this era, I am inclined to consider Rinchen Zangpo to be the mastermind and organizer rather than the actual person in charge of design and construction of every single temple ascribed to him.

[4] For a description of this event see the biography of Rinchen Zangpo (Snellgrove and Skorupski 1980, 93).

[5] According to Rene de Nebesky Wojkowitz (1956, 36) Dorje Chenmo may be regarded an emanation or even a form of Palden Lhamo [*dPal ldan lha mo*] or Sri Devi.

[6] Quoting from the biography of Rinchen Zangpo by Lobsang Zotpa [*Blobzang bzodpa*] *Rin.chen bzang. po'i rnam.thar*. p. 15 lines 3–4, Tibetan text in Appendix 8, Tib. 27.

[7] Due to the complete loss of the iconographic program and artistic decoration it is impossible to ascertain the actual cycle and main deity of any of the temples of Nyarma. At the time of the 2002 survey the center of the assembly hall of the Main Temple still had the lion throne of Vairocana, but only the ruined seat and the base as well as the empty mandorlas on the rear wall and near the entrance have survived. All the sculptures have gone and it is therefore impossible to ascertain the actual identity of the cycle at Nyarma.

Fig. 1: Charang Vairocana with the small wooden image of Rangrig Dungma almost completely hidden behind the large-size wooden sculptures (photo: G. Kozicz).

Fig. 2: The small wooden image of Rangrig Dungma (photo: G. Kozicz)

into the Buddhist doctrinal system. Obstacles to the endeavor of establishing Dorje Chenmo's identity – or rather the moment when the amalgamation was completed and the figure actually came into being Dorje Chenmo – at Tabo are iconographic variants among the depictions of Dorje Chenmo, deviations from the textual descriptions as well as the loss of the earliest mural depicting her (Jahoda 2006, 25).

In his study, Jahoda also discusses the case of Rangrig Spulma of Charang, locally known as Rangrig Dungma, the protectress of another temple related to Rinchen Zangpo. Her iconographic features are identical to those of Dorje Chenmo. She is depicted as a wooden sculpture and placed on a small altar directly below Vairocana who had once been the central figure of a sculptural Vajradhatu mandala set to which

the temple had originally been dedicated. Jahoda suggests that the name of "Rangrig" Dungma refers to an earlier local deity and that her identity was transformed into Dorje Chenmo – only in this case the name was not altered (Jahoda 2006, 50 Abb. 8). It is worth adding that Christiane Kalantari refers to Jahoda's work and points out the importance of Dorje Chenmo and her role in the subjugation and absorption of indigenous beliefs into the Buddhist doctrine (Kalantari 2010, 102).

Alternatively it might be presumed, that the deity was actually called Dorje Chenmo at some point but the name was changed back into the original one of the local protectress. Today, the small sculpture of the deity is located under the sculpture of Vairocana. Her cult goes far beyond simple veneration and she is attributed the highest status – even more important than Mahavairocana – by the present monastic community of Kargyu nuns. Consequently, the temple is nowadays referred to as Rangrigtse Temple.

LHATHOS AND TEMPLES: THE ARCHAIC AND THE ORTHODOX

According to the spatial principles of Buddhist iconography, the appointment of a deity as protector or protectress to a temple naturally resulted in his or her depiction above the entrance. Thereby the guardian was incorporated into the iconographic and ideological system of the temple.

The mode of integration into the visual program of a temple was only one of two major ways the cult of a guardian deity was "Buddhanised". The second way was through the incorporation of a *lhatho* [*lha tho*], literally an abode for the deity, into Buddhist practices and "sacred topography". Although the guardian may be presented within a temple's visual program, it is actually the lhatho through which he or she manifests himself/herself – and temporarily in a most intense way through an oracle during a ceremony again related to the lhatho.

In regard to formal typology, the lhatho constitutes the most archaic among the many artifacts in Tibetan Buddhist art and architecture – and as such stands in sharp contrast to the precisely calculated and designed architecture of the Second Diffusion based on the geometric principles of the (Vajradhatu) mandala. The most common form of a lhatho has three major components. Firstly, a solid cubic base made of stone or mud brick, painted either white or red (or both) and occasionally decorated with symbols such as the sun and moon, faces or simple dotted patterns. Secondly, red painted horns or even complete skulls of blue sheep or ibex are placed on top of the cube. Thirdly, branches of juniper or some local broadleaf are attached by *khata* [*khabtags*], a white ceremonial scarve, to a central post which is either a spear or a trident. A lhatho site is normally completed by a *darchen* [*dar chen*], a wooden pole with yak tail and textiles fixed to the top and / or an actual "life tree" nearby recognizable by

Fig. 3: The stupa field near Shey, the administrative and economic center of Ladakh during the period of the Second Diffusion (photo: E. Bertsch).

its red painted trunk[8]. A major aspect of the lhatho cult is the regular renewal of the structure during which the cube is repainted and the branches replaced by new ones. Such events usually take place once a year around *Losar* [*lo sar*], the Tibetan New Year. This annual complete redecoration results in a continuous re-shaping of the structures. In addition to a lack of datable art historical evidence such as paintings, this practice poses a serious problem for the historical evaluation of lhathos[9].

However, there is little doubt that the archaic architectural concept of the lhatho is rooted in the pre-Buddhist cultural stratum of Shang Shung and the indigenous cults of pre-Buddhist Tibet. When the Buddhists established their monastic system, neither the stupa nor the temple were structures composed to "communicate" with the environmental factors which were so crucial for Himalayan societies. The temple architecture of the Second Diffusion originates from a geometric concept that is based on the

---

[8] Occasionally *lhathos* have niches or even cambers (in Deskit, Hunder, Hemis and Gya). Sometimes *lhathos* are only defined through paintings on natural stones and in rare cases even trees only are considered as natural *lhathos* (in Kanji). It is beyond the scope of this article to go into detail of these specific cases, which have so far escaped scholarly attention.

[9] The oldest date I have so far been given for a specific *lhatho* in Ladakh was for the *lhatho* of Kangri Labstan Dorje Bhawa [*Kang ri lha btsen rdo rje 'bar ba*] in Nyoma Mud in Upper Ladakh which was said to be 456 years old in 2014.

Fig. 4: Lhatho of Rangrig Dungma in the centre of Charang Village (photo: G. Kozicz).

centric arrangement of elements and it is therefore introverted by nature. The function of the stupa was the representation of Buddhist Law or Dharma, and as such, it was a fundamental element among the visual artistic vocabulary of orthodox Buddhism. It may therefore be assumed that when the Buddhists had to make their choice for how to enshrine and venerate the local divinities of non-Buddhist origin, they probably could not opt for the stupa. Instead, they decided to stick to the preexisting concept of the lhatho. The Buddhists incorporated the local spirits and their archaic abodes into their practices. The exact reconstruction of that process remains speculative since there is no historical data on lhathos during that period. However, the conceptual differences between the orthodox monastic architecture and the lhatho as well as the functional purpose of the local divinities clearly point to the hypothesis that a clear spatial and functional separation between the two systems existed. The introverted monastic structures were clustered in the lower levels of the valleys while the lhathos were strategically situated all over topography such as on rocks, above fields and near rivulets in order to communicate with – and thereby control – the natural environment.

At some point in Buddhist history of the region, the segregated attitude was abandoned. The following section of the article I discuss a number of lhathos of Dorje Chenmo and other local protectors that literally made their way into the orthodox Buddhist temple, both physically and ideologically.

THE LHATHOS OF DORJE CHENMO

The oldest surviving temples of Ladakh – formerly divided into Ladakh and Maryul – with their iconographic and artistic features widely intact are those of Alchi Choskor, Mangyu, Sumda Chun and Saspotse, commonly referred to as the Alchi Group of Monuments[10]. Similar to the temples of Nyarma and Tabo, the architectural plans of the Alchi Group temples reflect a symmetric pattern and a proportional canon based on the relationship between square and circle. The structure of their iconographic features resembles identical geometric and configurational principles.

While some damage has affected the entrance walls of some of the temples resulting in a loss of the paintings of these sections[11], some of the temples have preserved their original murals above the entrance. Such is the case with the three early temples of the Alchi Choskor, the Dukhang, the Sumtsek and the Manjusri Lhakhang. The three temples share the compositional and also stylistic features of the panel right above the entrance. These panels center on Mahakala flanked by two female deities displaying iconographic features recalling indigenous models of non-Buddhist origin. One of the female figures has been identified by Roger Goepper as Sri Devi or Palden Lhamo. In a recent study on the Alchi Sumtsek, Chiara Bellini has drawn attention to the second one and identified her as an early form of Dorje Chenmo in a formative phase. Bellini points out the significance of the triadic composition within which Dorje Chenmo appears in equivalent position to Palden Lhamo [*dPal ldan lha mo*] of whom she is considered an emanation. Bellini further highlights the fact, that the appearance of the tutelary deity of Rinchen Zangpo creates a direct link between the Great Translator and Alchi (Bellini in print).

The same figure is already found inside the Dukhang which predates the Sumtsek. Unfortunately the Mahakala panel of the Manjusri Lhakhang has been partly repainted where Dorje Chenmo might have been shown. On the opposite side, however, a female figure has survived which is almost identical to the Dorje Chenmo of the Dukhang, the only (but significant) difference being the sword held in her right hand instead of the *vajra*, Dorje Chenmo's primary attribute.

Although these deities were certainly part of the standardized iconographic programs, their placement remained strictly confined to the panel exactly above the

---

[10] There is considerable dispute on the exact dating of the temples. Inscriptional and paleographic evidence points to the earliest temples being founded in the second half of the 11th century (Denwood 2015, 159–66). This is supported by architectural evidence (Kozicz 2010, 31–41) and art historical evidence (Amy Heller and Chiara Bellini), while the later dating of 12th–13th century put forward by Roger Goepper (1990, 159–75) is supported by Christian Luczanits (2003, 27).

[11] A complete loss of the entrance wall due to collapse occurred in the temple of Sumda Chun, while the murals of the two halls of Mangyu have widely lost their paintings of the entrance walls following water intrusion and repainting.

Fig. 5: Dorje Chenmo dressed in feather robe of the Dukhang Mahakala panel (photo: H. Poell).

entrance. Her subordinate position suggests no specific cult of Dorje Chenmo was actually conducted inside any of the temples. Remarkably, Christiane Kalantari noted a *thangka* painting of Dorje Chenmo in a wooden shrine fixed to one of the fluted columns of the hall. She further notes bundles of khata and the fact, that the thangka is shown to the public around the time of Losar, which is when special veneration of the guardians is conducted (Kalantari 2010, 101).

During my last visit to the temple in 2014, the column was heavily covered with different sets of scarves and banners. The banners above the box are all colorful while the bundle below the box is made of white banners and khata. The box itself had a locked glass window, behind which nine small-size banners could be seen. During an interview with a group of young monks from Likir Monastery it turned out that this was not only a special thangka, but that the whole set was actually considered as the lhatho of Dorje Chenmo. In regards to form and composition the box showed no similarity to the usual architectural concept of a lhatho – except for the khata, but it is by no means exclusively used for lhathos. Almost all components that normally constitute a lhatho were missing. Form and function had disintegrated in this particu-

Fig. 6: Manjusri Lhakhang Mahakala panel with another figure in feather dress (photo: H. Poell).

lar case. According to the monks, the deity is "always around" but not permanently residing inside the shrine. Although there is an image of her hidden behind the nine banners or face covers (*shalkyap*), she manifests herself inside the lhato only on one special occasion for five days. Only at the 5-day-long annual ceremony is the shrine opened and the nine face covers removed in a prescribed order. The first cover is put to the right, the next to the left and so on. Ahead of that, the ceremonial master has to undergo extraordinarily extensive ablutions ahead of the ceremony. Dorje Chenmo is then invoked exclusively for this ceremony. The ceremony itself is a silent rite and the only acoustic support is a drum performance called *lharna*. During these five days the daily Buddhist *pujas* continue and both liturgical systems exist contemporaneously inside the hall. For this period, lay people also frequently venerate the protectress and join the ceremony. It should be noted that there is no liturgical relationship between the depiction of a female deity dressed in feather robe identified as Dorje Chenmo and the deity enshrined in the "lhatho box". There are no hints for any liturgical action addressing the deity in the Mahakala panel during the performance of the rites related to the lhatho. Neither the monks nor the lay community draw a connection between
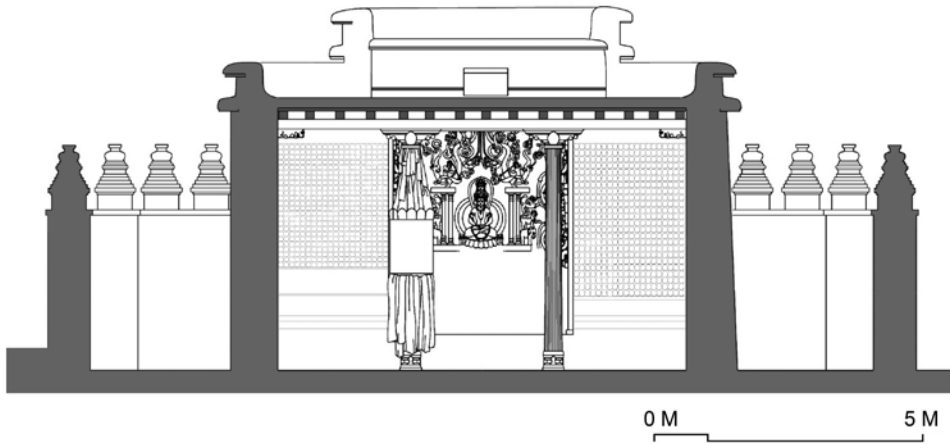
Fig. 7: Cross-section of the Dukhang with lhatho inside the box (photo: G. Kozicz).

Fig. 8: Lhatho of Dorje Chenmo attached to the fluted column of the Alchi Dukhang
(photo: H. Poell).

the deity shown on the thangka and the deity of the Mahakala panel although it can be assumed that they both are rooted in an original, indigenous cult.

The iconographic programs of the major temples of the Alchi group share not only an architectural concept based on an assembly hall in front of an apse with a porch flanked by two tower-like chapels but also a main iconographic topic, the Vajradhatu-mandala cycle in sculpture centering on the four-headed Mahavairocana on the main wall of each cella. The most impressive of those Vajradhatumandalas is that of Sumda

Fig. 9: Image of Dorje Chenmo hidden behind face scarves (photo: N.C. Chunka).
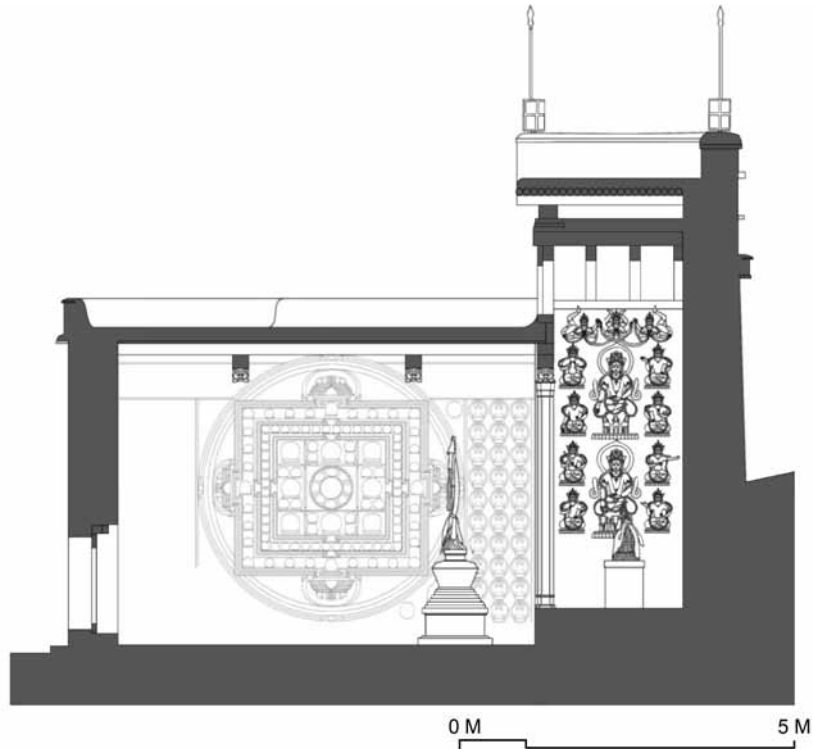
Fig. 10: Main section with the lhatho below Akshobhya (photo: G. Kozicz).

Chung, where all 37 deities are represented in sculpture and configured symmetrically on the three walls of the apse. It is a perfect system not only on an artistic, but also configurational level. It is therefore quite unexpected to find again a lhatho inside this temple – this time placed inside the apse just to the right below Mahavairocana. The lhatho is composed of the usual elements, and only the most archaic feature, the horns, are missing. On a white cube, a bundle of twigs is held together by several bands of textiles. The bundle is further decorated with ceremonial scarves and instead of a spear or trident a simple wooden stick is in its center. The lhatho, which has already been mentioned in passing by Nawang Tsering Shakspo, is again dedicated to Dorje Chenmo (see: Tsering Shakspo 2012, 163).

The lhatho does not fit into the over-all spatial system at all. Neither its form nor its position conforms to the formal and configurational principles of the original conception. According to oral tradition, Dorje Chenmo had originally resided in a lhatho outside the temple among a group of stupas along the path towards the temple's entrance. The reason for the transfer of the lhatho inside the innermost sanctum was the harmful activity undertaken by the deity against pregnant women and brides in particular. It

Fig. 11: Vajradhatumandala with the lhatho at the bottom to the right of Mahavairocana
(photo: G. Kozicz).

has already been noted by de Nebesky-Wojkowitz that peaceful *dharmapalas* are of an instable nature and that they are apt to suddenly assume a ferocious disposition (see: Nebesky-Wojkowitz 1956, 5–6). In order to eliminate the danger, Dorje Chenmo was moved and literally put under the control of Mahavairocana and his retinue. The exact circumstances are not clearly known any more since – according to a local informant – the transfer took place "some time ago under the supervision of some Rinpoche". Now situated to the right of the cosmic form of the Mahavairocana, Dorje Chenmo is at the same time also at the feet of Aksobhya, head of the Vajra Family and the most powerful among the four directional Buddhas of the mandala. In this context, mention must also be made of a stupa in the assembly area to the right of the apse. The stupa is of the Tibetan Enlightenment type and can scarcely be older than the 15ᵗʰ century. Its most remarkable feature which might be of relevance in the current context is the decoration of its upper section. Like with the lhatho, twigs and grass are placed on the *harmika* and the central post is decorated with a khata. Despite these formal similarities, no further clues for a closer relationship between the two objects on a liturgical level were put forward by my informant. Unlike most other lhathos, two ceremonies per year instead of only one are held for this Dorje Chenmo lhatho.

Fig. 12: The lhatho of Dorje Chenmo inside the Sumda Chun Vajradhatu Temple (photo: G. Kozicz).

MOVING LHATHOS

The first scholar to mention a lhatho installed inside an early Buddhist temple was August Hermann Francke who mentioned a lhatho inside the now almost completely dilapidated temple of Chigtan in Purig, Lower Ladakh. Francke noted the lhatho inside the hall which was dedicated to a 39-deity mandala in a sculpture placed on the facing wall of the temple (Francke 1914, 100[12]). Unfortunately, only the remains of one lateral wall of this monument, which can be dated to the beginning of the Second Diffusion, exists today. Another example of a lhatho inside a Buddhist shrine is found inside the so-called Lhatho Lhakhang of the Alchi Tsatsapuri Temple Compound. The main dedication of the temple which can be dated to the late 13th to 14th centuries is a Mahasamvara-Kalacakra Mandala in the center of its apse. Over the past generations, the temple has been owned and maintained by the local Tongspon Family who use it as a family chapel and whose residence is directly behind the temple on the top of a rocky spur. Around the middle of the 20th century the family decided to transfer the family lhatho into the temple[13]. This specific lhatho was originally installed on a nearby mountain called Daltong close to the Stakspi La[14]. The deity, whose name is *Rungma* [*Rung ma*], was – and still is – expected to protect the highland summer pasture land. Since the ascent to the lhatho site for the annual ceremonies conducted around the Losar had become too dangerous and exhausting, the protector was moved from the grazing grounds into the temple and the transfer was carried out by monks. The fact, that the Lhatho Lhakhang was also known locally as Daltong Lhakhang, before the permanent enshrinement of Rungma, evidently suggests that the temple had already been in use as a place to evoke and seek contact with the family protector before the transfer took place. Although the sphere of action of the deity is a significant distance away and not directed towards human beings, the temple may not be visited by female members of the family[15].

The occupation of the temple by the family protector and the final transfer of Rungma's lhatho into the chamber was probably stimulated by the ongoing blackening of the murals through dust and soot from the butter lamps which made the murals unrecognizable. Illegibility has caused a subsequent loss of knowledge of the original

---

[12] As can be seen in a related photograph (101, Plate XLII b) there was another *lhatho* placed directly on the front wall above the entrance.

[13] Personal communication with the grandfather of the family, August 2012.

[14] The Stakspi La or Ibex Pass, connects the Alchi Valley and Sumda Chung and is among the steepest paths in the area. The Tongspon family lhatho was accessed via that route. Source: Tsering Dolka, Alchi.

[15] There are a number of sites where women are forbidden to access lhathos. In some cases, such a rule is only temporary (such as during pregnancy), sometimes it is permanent (such as at Nyoma-Mud where a red stone marks the line beyond which women are not allowed).

Fig. 13: Rungma Lhato in the centre of the Lhatho Lhakhang / Daltong Lhakhang
(photo: G. Kozicz).

iconographic content. Rungma still holds his position as a protector of the pasture land and distance to it has had no negative impact on his powers.

The actual ceremony through which the lhatho is annually renewed takes place on the first new moon after Losar. This act replaces a lack of the hall's function after the moment when the temple could not fulfill its original liturgical function any more due to the loss or illegibility of the original murals. Through attaching the insignia of the lhatho onto the post or column in front of the apse – the post being slightly located aside the main axis and thereby not interrupting the visual axis between Kalacakra and Aksobhya on the facing wall – the lhatho is literally placed in the center of the chamber. Through the installation of the lhatho on the central post this temple was actually transformed into a protector's chapel.

Apparently, the installation of lhathos inside temples was not a phenomenon confined to Dorje Chenmo. A significant difference to the Rungma Lhatho discussed above is the central position of that guardian within the over-all spatial, iconographic and liturgical context. Inside early Alchi temples the lhathos of Dorje Chenmo remain in a subordinate position within the original overall concept.
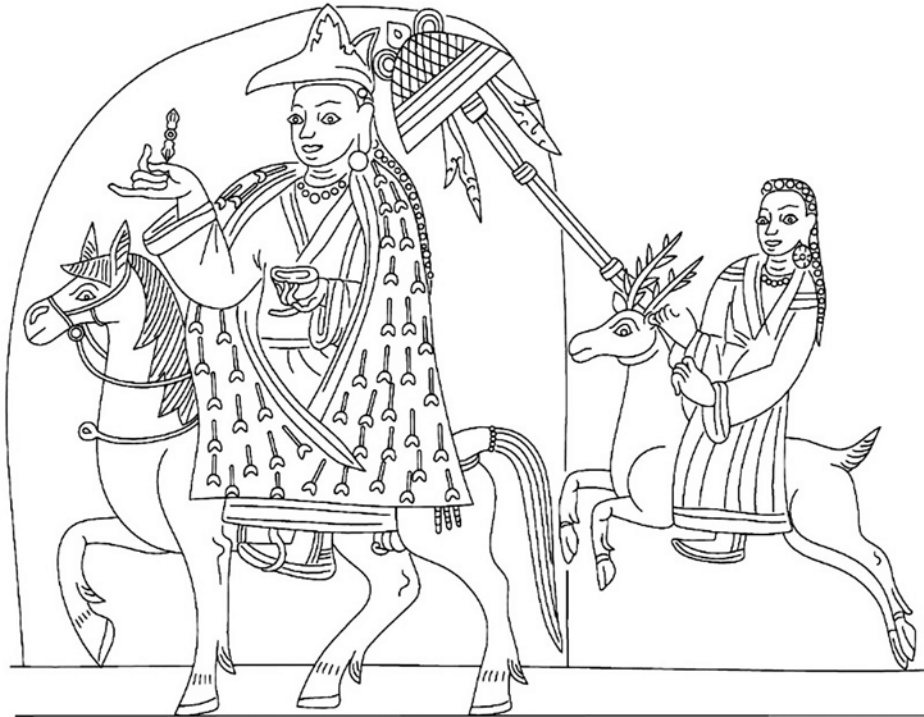
Fig. 14: Dorje Chenmo inside the Lhakhang Soma of Alchi (G. Kozicz).

CONCLUSIONS

The relevance of the identification of a lhatho system dedicated to Dorje Chenmo inside the Alchi temples is manifold. First of all, her cult apparently never faded away even after the advance of Central Tibetan Buddhist schools into Ladakh. Inside the Lhakhang Soma of Alchi which reflects the influence of the Drigung Order, she was even separated from the Mahakala panel. She became a deity in her own right and the size of her representation was significantly enlarged. Her depiction inside the Lhakhang Soma is very similar to the way she is shown inside the Kawaling Stupa of Nyoma in Upper-Ladakh, another site that can be attributed to the activities of the Drigung Order and roughly dates to the 14th century. By that time her iconography apparently had become standardized.

It may also be noted that her cult continued at the sites of the Alchi Group of Monuments although these temples were subsequently passed over to different orders. However, at that point of religious history (the 13th/14th centuries) the function of Dorje Chenmo as a tool to overcome indigenous beliefs ceased to be an issue and

by that time her iconography had also been standardized. The Alchi Compound is nowadays administered by the Gelugpa monastery of Likir while Sumda Chun belongs to the Drukpa monastery of Hemis.

In a wider context, the presence of the tutelary deity of Rinchen Zangpo predating the final iconographic standardization within the early temples of the Second Diffusion suggests that Dorje Chenmo was instrumental in assisting the firm establishment of Buddhism all over the region. The presence of her lhathos adds weight to the hypothesis that she was strategically used to absorb local protectors and to merge the earlier cultural stratum with her iconography and religious concept. Unfortunately, in this respect, Francke did not collect any further information about the lhatho inside the Chigtan Temple and the enshrined guardian. The assumption that it might have been Dorje Chenmo finds support by a group of lhathos installed in various houses of the village of Kanji all of which enshrine a male deity called "Jo" Dorje Chenmo. Kanji is located in a side valley of the Chigtan-Bodkarbu Valley. Now, today there is no trace of any early temple left inside Kanji Village, but further up in the interior of minor side valley beyond Kanji – just an hour walk away – there is the rebuilt temple of Lachutse. The extraordinary quality of the craftsmanship of carvings and the stylistic feature of the components of the wooden structure (pillars, capitals, door frame, etc.) which were re-used for the reconstruction of the collapsed temple point to the original structure being dated to around AD 1100 latest. According to oral tradition, the Lachutse Temple was one of three old temples around Kanji[16]. Apparently, Jo Dorje Chenmo again originates from the amalgamation of the protectress of Rinchen Zangpo with a, this time male, local guardian. The hypothesis of the female origin of the protector finds support from the fact, that the guardian's name retained the female form of Chen-"mo".

It appears that the major religious sites of the Buddhist Kingdom of Guge and Purang, and probably even beyond, came under one protective umbrella that spanned across the dominion at a scale which has not yet been realized. It appears that a twofold strategy was applied by Buddhist propaganda. First, was the inclusion of indigenous deities into the Buddhist pantheon and the iconographic concepts of temples in a subordinate position. In addition to the inclusion into the orthodox system and art, which was perceived in the monastic context, the lhatho was also "buddhanized". However, the lhatho was not adapted to Buddhist visual language and retained its original non-orthodox, archaic conception. The lhatho was institutionalized to ascert the control of Buddhism over the natural environment and to secure the position of Buddhism outside the monastic context. While the cult of the local protectors within

[16] I am most grateful to Edoardo Ferrari for providing this important information. A co-authored publication of the various spatio-symbolic and socio-cultural layers of the Kanji valley is in preparation. A summary of several features of the village is also published in Ferrari 2015, 73–77.

the iconographic programs of temples was absorbed into the wider pantheon and lost its indigenous significance, the importance of the manifestations inside the various lhathos constantly grew. As a result, lhathos have been even transferred into temples. At its extreme, the cult of the lhatho and the enshrined local protector temporarily even appropriated orthodox religious space – as is documented from the Alchi Dukhang. In a way, the archaic form infiltrated the orthodox system. The case of the Rangrigtse Temple near Charang provides evidence that the cult of the original protector not only survived through the superimposition by Dorje Chenmo, but even regained control over the orthodox system on a local level.

Further research into the religious history of lhathos will certainly yield new data to complete previous research and the present architectural discussion. Due to the formal principles of lhathos and their nature – which includes the absence of datable compositional or decorative elements – the architectural documentation provides little definitive information on the developments that finally led to her physical manifestations inside the Alchi temples. However, her lhathos inside the temples provide ample evidence for the perpetual presence of her cult even today though the mode of representation and her veneration have completely changed.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B e l l i n i C. (in print). *Some Pieces of the Puzzle: The Restoration of the Alchi gSum brtsegs by bKra shis rNam rgyal and Other Considerations.*

D e n w o o d P. 2015. The Dating of the Sumtsek Temple at Alchi. In E. Lo Bue and J. Bray (eds.), *Art and Architecture in Ladakh. Cross-Cultural Transmissions in the Himalayas and Karakorum.* Leiden – Boston, 159–166.

F r a n c k e A. H. 2014. *Antiquities of Indian Tibet.* Vol. 1 *Personal Narrative. Archaeological Survey of India.* Calcutta (reprint 1994 Archaeological Survey of India. New Delhi).

G o e p p e r R. 1990. Clues for the Dating of the Three-storeyed Temple (Sumtsek) in Alchi, Ladakh. In *Asiatische Studien: Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Gesellschaft für Asienkunde* 44 (2), 159–175.

v a n H a m P. 2011. Ladakh's Missing Link? The Murals of Tragkhung Kowache. *In Orientations* 42 (5). Hong Kong, 50–57.

J a h o d a C. 2006. Bemerkungen zur Tradition einer weiblichen Schutzgottheit (srung ma) in Tabo (Spiti Tal, Himachal Pradesh, Indien). In A. Gingrich and H. Guntram (eds.), *Der Rand und die Mitte: Beiträge zur Sozialanthropologie und Kulturgeschichte Tibets und des Himalaya.* Vienna, 11–54.

K a l a n t a r i C. 2010. Courtly Cavaliers, Mounted Heroes and Pehar. In E. Lo Bue and C. Luczanits (eds.), *Tibetan Art and Architecture in Context, Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies held at Koenigswinter 2006.* Halle/Saale, 75–120.

K o z i c z G. 2008–2009. From Mainamati to Nyarma: Remarks on the Development from Cruciform to Oblong-shaped Temple Lay-outs. *Journal of Bengal Art* 13&14. Dhaka, 9–21.

K o z i c z G. 2010. The Architectural Matrix of the Alchi Sumtsek. *Indo-Asiatische Zeitschrift* 14. Berlin, 31–41.

K o z i c z G. 2014. The Tsugla Khang of Tabo and the Three-dimensionality of the Vajradhatu Mandala. In P. van Ham (ed.), *Tabo – Gods of Light.* Munich, 71–75.

L o b s a n g   Z o t p a. *Rin.chen bzang.po'i rnam.thar*.

L u c z a n i t s   C. 2003. Art-historical Aspects of Dating. In I. Kreide-Damani (ed.), *Dating Tibetan Art*. Wiesbaden.

d e   N e b e s k y - W o j k o w i t z   R. 1956. *Oracles and Demons of Tibet. The Cult and Iconography of Tibetan Protective Deities*. The Hague (reprint Kathmandu 1993).

S h a k s p o   N. T. 2012. *A Cultural History of Ladakh. Centre for Research on Ladakh*. Sabu-Leh.

S n e l l g r o v e   D. and   S k o r u p s k i   T. 1980. *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh II: Zangskar and the Cave Temples of Ladakh*. Warminster.

V i t a l i   R. 1999. *Records of Tho.ling: A Literary and Visual Reconstruction of the "Mother" Monastery in Gu.ge*. Dharamshala.

Author's address:

Gerald Kozicz, Ph. D.
Institute for Architecture and Media
Technical University of Graz
Kronesgasse 5/3, Graz AUSTRIA
e-mail: gerald.kozicz@gmx.at

CURRENT ANALYSES ON SHIPKI-LA TRADE, KINNAUR, 2017

RAFAL BESZTERDA

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
NICOLAUS COPERNICUS UNIVERSITY IN TORUN, POLAND

This paper reflects on the most current trading activities through Shipki Pass in Kinnaur, Himachal Pradesh. Apart from presenting economic data it discusses the background context, political conditions and some future prospects of the trading process.

*   *   *

Tekst artykułu omawia współczesne przedsięwzięcia handlowe dokonujące się przez przełęcz Szipki w okręgu Kinnaur, Himaćal Pradeś. Obok danych ekonomicznych przedstawia tło kontekstowe, uwarunkowania polityczne oraz pomysły rozwojowe tej działalności.

K e y w o r d s: Himalayas, Kinnaur, trade, Shipki-la, Tibet, China.

INTRODUCTION

In my own previous publications some false predictions in relation to the declining tendencies of total border trade value through Shipki-la in Kinnaur (Beszterda 2015, 239–259; Beszterda 2014, 117–134) were made. In the light of more recent research findings, I wish to take the opportunity to revise some of my earlier conclusions and interpretations.

For readers who are not fully aware of the issue, tax-free border trade between India and Tibet was reactivated in the 1990s. Until this reopening the Himalayan passes had been officially sealed since 1962. The first pass designated for this purpose was Lipulekh in Pithoragarh Distt., Uttarakhand (opened to all intents and purposes in 1992). The second was Shipki-la in Kinnaur Distt., H.P. – the subject of this paper (opened in 1994), and the third was Nathu-la in Eastern Dist., Sikkim (since 2006). These three are to date the only authorized entry points under the Indo-China treaty of Trans-Himalayan trade[1].

---

[1] The basis of Trans-Himalayan trade was signed in Beijing in 1958 (April, 29) and continued until the 1962 war, being resumed in 1978.

Source: Himachal Pradesh Ministry of Tourism, 2017.

After 22 years of ongoing trade exchange, it is an opportune time to summarize this activity and pose a number of questions. This article will endeavour to furnish comprehensive answers although a caveat must be added to the effect that on many levels it will not be easy or sometimes possible to do so.

The balance sheet presented in the Table 1 clearly shows the values of both exports and imports from 1994 to the present.

It is essential to elaborate on the table above to assist the reader in interpreting it. Firstly, the number of traders going to Tibet has no direct relation to the total amount of single trips undertaken by them. Some of the traders were crossing the border once or twice a season whilst others some five or more. The record to date is 11 trips in a single year[2]. In 2012, just 46 traders made 180 trips in total. Theoretically, Indian traders are limited to staying 72 hours on the Tibetan side but in practice this often stretches to five days in Shipki village where traders from Tibet come. The strictness

---

[2] Usually the trading season starts on 1st of June and ends on 30th November but specific dates are announced officially every year by the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, the Department of Commerce, Government of India (once it commenced in May and stretched to about mid-October).

Table 1. The dynamic of Indo-Tibetan trade through Shipki-la, Kinnaur, H.P.# (See detailed info##).

Complete data set since the reopening of Shipki-la in 1994				
Year	No. of Indian traders visiting Tibet/China	No. of Tibetan traders visiting India	Export from India Value	Import from Tibet Value
1994	90	0	1 109 130 INR* (approx. 35,200 US$)	1 493 200 INR** (approx. 47,400 US$)
1995	63	0	764 194 INR (approx. 22,250 US$)	1 654 000 INR (approx. 48,150 US$)
1996	30	0	653 687 INR (approx. 18,200 US$)	983 545 INR (approx. 27,400 US$)
1997	39	0	1 290 953 INR (approx. 32,700 US$)	2 176 971 INR (approx. 55,100 US$)
1998	30	0	641 090 INR (approx. 16,250 US$)	540 545 INR (approx. 13,700 US$)
1999	40	0	1 350 513 INR (approx. 31,850 US$)	1 395 625 INR (approx. 32,900 US$)
2000	47	0	921 170 INR (approx. 21,150 US$)	2 064 450 INR (approx. 47,350 US$)
2001	35	0	1 204 745 INR (approx. 25,850 US$)	1 720 550 INR (approx. 36,900 US$)
2002	32	0	1 720 550 INR (approx. 35,250 US$)	2 581 630 INR (approx. 52,900 US$)
2003	25	0	930 339 INR (approx. 19,600 US$)	1 538 625 INR (approx. 32,400 US$)
2004	23	0	1 262 680 INR (approx. 29,100 US$)	30 730 891 INR (approx. 707,350 US$)
2005	18	0	1 232 221 INR (approx. 28,150 US$)	36 366 598 INR (approx. 831,150 US$)
2006	18	0	468 060 INR (approx. 10,500 US$)	289 010 INR (approx. 6,500 US$)
2007	23	0	372 925 INR (approx. 8,550 US$)	351 100 INR (approx. 8,050 US$)
2008	18	0	355 046 INR* (approx. 8,900 US$)	388 400 INR* (approx. 7,900 US$)
2009	17	0	599 130 INR (approx. 11,750 US$)	589 204 INR (approx. 11,550 US$)
2010	23	0	786 700 INR (approx. 17,450 US$)	1 062 600 INR (approx. 23,550 US$)
2011	24	0	577 031 INR (approx. 12,950 US$)	919 940 INR (approx. 20,600 US$)
2012	46	0	8 980 460 INR (approx. 175,550 US$)	8 729 030 INR (approx. 170,650 US$)

Table 1. Continued.

Complete data set since the reopening of Shipki-la in 1994				
Year	No. of Indian traders visiting Tibet/China	No. of Tibetan traders visiting India	Export from India Value	Import from Tibet Value
2013	63	0	38 485 792 INR (approx. 562,750 US$)	38 382 110 INR (approx. 561,250 US$)
2014	80	0	38 351 173 INR (approx. 615,250 US$)	38 501 185 INR (approx. 617,650 US$)
2015**	71	0	50 105 609 INR (approx. 760,350 US$)	43 605 900 INR (approx. 661,700 US$)
2016	93	0	40 383 000 INR (approx. 603,080 US$)	45 590 000 INR (approx. 680,850 US$)
2017***	51 (27)	0	2 238 000 INR (approx. 35,030 US$)	3 683 000 INR (approx. 57,650 US$)

[#] Compiled from various sources, mostly Indian newspapers such as: The Hindustan Times, The Times of India, The Tribune (Chandigarh), HP Hill Post, and many others, then compared and cross-verified.

[##*] Approximate exchange value of trade (in US Dollars) in respective years was calculated according to the average rate of currency exchange, but mainly in the second part of the year when trade activities take place. Figures are estimations.

[###**] It was an Olympic Games year in Beijing. Due to security concerns the Chinese authorities closed the passes to India shortly after the trading season began. Therefore figures indicating a decrease in the value of imports/exports should not be taken as meaningful. In fact, in 2008, there was an increased interest in trading activities observed (at least a potential interest).

[####***] The opening of the season was delayed due to the so called Doklam standoff. Tensions on the border were reported also from the Kinnaur area. The first traders crossed Shipki Pass on 22nd August 2017. Although this text dates from mid-2016, some recent data from the autumn of 2017 was included (officially the trading season ends on 30th Nov. each year). Data for 2017 remains unverified and is cited after Pratibha Chauhan, *India, China border trade crashes after Doklam*, The Tribune, Shimla, 9. Dec. 2017.

of the immigration officers fluctuates in accordance with the season. Any tensions between both countries or internal issues that may arise delay the Spring opening or tighten law enforcement, leading to greater activity of the security services and army officials' inflexibility.

LIMITATIONS OF TRADE VALUE ALLOWANCES

Despite the restricted and short list of tradable goods allowed in so called tax free border trade (which I intend to reflect on below), the daily allowance since 1994[3] has amounted to a meagre 25 thousand INR (Indian rupees), and remained at this level

[3] In the case of trade through Shipki Pass since its opening moment in 1994 but in Lipulekh/Gunji since 1992.

until the end of the 2014 trading season[4]. Just before the beginning of the 2015 season the daily allowance was raised to 100 thousand INR (1 lakh)[5] for the Shipki-la and Lipulekh crossing points. However, with regards to the Western Himalayan passes (such as Shipki-la in Kinnaur and Lipulekh in Uttarakhand), it is simply impossible to complete a trip to the Tibetan side and back in one day. So in practice the government approved a daily allowance meaning a single trip limit. It is one of the most substantial differences between trade being undertaken in the Western and Eastern Himalayas (Nathu-la, Sikkim). In the latter, the only trading market located in Sheratang (Indian side, about 7 kms before Nathu-la) is connected to Gangtok by an automobile-passable road. Again in practice, Sikkimese traders go there every day, from Monday to Thursday, and they are able to make real use of their daily allowance, which started at 100 thousand INR, from the moment trade started there in June 2006, and this was increased to 200 thousand INR in May 2012. The question arises what these figures mean in the light of comments made on the poor trade value in the Western Himalayas in comparison to Sikkim. First of all Sikkimese traders have been granted a 1 lakh[6] daily allowance since the commencement of trade through Nathu-la. Additionally, a road was constructed to Nathu from both sides which has undoubtedly improved the trading potential of the crossing point. Those operating through Shipki and Lipulekh passes for long years found themselves in less favorable conditions. This article is not the place to deliberate about the reasons behind such inequality of treatment meted out to citizens of the country. Let us close with the statement that sometimes political and security reasons take priority over the well-being of the local inhabitants. It should also be added that if the issue of belonging to the Scheduled Tribes[7] were added to the mix then this could open a further can of worms.

[4] Para 2.8 a iv IEC Number Exempted Categories: "Persons importing / exporting goods from / to Nepal, Myanmar through Indo-Myanmar border areas and China (through Gunji, Namgaya Shipki-la and Nathu-la ports), provided CIF value of a single consignment does not exceed Indian Rs. 25, 000. In case of Nathu-la port, the applicable value ceiling will be INR 100,000/-"(Handbook of Procedures2012, 8).

[5] Public Notice No. 7/2015–2020, New Delhi, dated 1st May, 2015. The text goes on as follows: 3. The revised para 2.07 (a) (iv) reads: "Persons importing/exporting goods from/to Nepal; Myanmar (through Indo-Myanmar border areas); and China (through Gunji, **Namgaya Shipki-la** and Nathu-la ports), provided that the CIF value of single consignment of import/export of goods from/to Nepal; and Myanmar (through Indo-Myanmar border areas) does not exceed INR 25,000/–: and in the case of China, (a) for import/export of goods through Gunji and **Namgaya Shipki-la**, a CIF value of a single consignment does not exceed INR 1,00,000/–; and (b) for import/export of goods through Nathu-la, CIF value of single consignment does not exceed INR 2,00,000/–." 4. Effect of this Public Notice: For border trade between India and China, the CIF value per consignment is being increased from INR 1,00,000/– to INR 2,00,000/– in case of Nathu-la, while for Gunji and **Namgaya Shipki-la**, the existing CIF value limit of INR 25,000/– is being enhanced to INR 1,00,000/–". (bold mine RB).

[6] 1 lakh = 100 000 and 1 crore = 10 000 000 which is the norm in naming large amounts in India.

[7] Scheduled Tribes is a listed group of ethnic and regional minorities protected by the Government of India, under the National Constitution. In this case I am referring to the lack of appreciation of such citizens by the majority.

Putting possible reasons for such government decisions aside, a 25-thousand INR. allowance is miniscule in terms of trade with, as was the case in 1994 (till 2015). It is no wonder then that border trade in the Western Himalayas for almost two decades did not indicate any signs for optimism. The bounce arose for two main reasons: first was the extension of the tradable goods list (through all three passes), and also due to simplification in the procedures behind obtaining an Import Export Code (IEC) and a license for such transactions. The IEC for trade through Himalayan passes was established as exception and permanent (No. 0100000134)[8], and obtaining it allowed a single trip allowance to be raised to as high as 25 lakhs Rupees. Currently, it is almost impossible to import/export items beyond this limit[9].

WHO CAN TRADE?

Kinnaur District is divided into three administrative blocks: Nichar, Kalpa and Pooh. The only authorized inhabitants who can apply for trade documents are those from the so called Pooh Block consisting of 32 villages, and of this number 15 are inhabited[10]. This area in total encompasses 3,384 km². If a map of the Pooh Block were perused it would be seen that it is comprised of Hangrang Valley, Ropa Valley, Moorang Area and the so called Upper Kinnaur (upstream Sutlej river). Based on the last Census, there are a possible 5,000 adult male inhabitants who might theoretically be interested in trading with Tibet[11]. Women have never traded.

A potential Trans-Himalayan trader starts the procedure with a form submitted directly into the hands of the Tehsildar[12] of Pooh. It is then forwarded to the Directorate of Customs in Chandigarh. Each application is cleared by security services and intelligence officials. This system involves strict examination procedures (in some years only half the applicants were granted the required documents). Finally, successful applicants receive a Travel Pass which is valid only for one trading season. The short validation period of the document is a serious obstacle for some traders and it should

---

[8] Persons importing/exporting permissible goods as notified from time to time, from / to China through Gunji, Namgaya Shipki-la and Nathu-la ports, subject to value ceilings of single consignment as given in Para 2.8 (iv) above (*Handbook of Procedures* 2012, 10).

[9] Estimations of some basic articles are as follows: the best basmati rice was at that time about 80 INR per kg. So for 1 lakh one could export 1,250 kgs of rice (allowed to 2014). Since the opening of the 2015 season, basmati rice has been banned. Such an amount would be a sizeable load for 13–15 good mules. A similar situation occurs with *misri* (unrefined sugar) which costs about 70 INR per kg, and refined oil for 100 INR per litre.

[10] *Census* 2011, 12, 52. Kinnaur is made up of 77 villages (inhabited and deserted).

[11] In 2011, there were 84,121 people in the whole of Kinnaur and 23,206 in Pooh Block, and a further 12,474 males, including children (*Census* 2011, 26).

[12] State administration consists of state, district, tehsil, and sub-tehsil levels.

Illustration 1 and 2. This sample document was issued for a trader from Sikkim but the pass form is standardized for all three Himalayan border trade areas.

be borne in mind that not an inconsiderate number of these sturdy people are neither familiar nor fluent enough to deal with Hindi bureaucratic forms.

CUSTOMS CLEARANCE AND LIST OF TRADABLE GOODS

Because all traders headed to Shipki-la near Namgia village (the last inhabited settlement, some 12 km before the pass), the custom post was located there. In practice, the custom officer shifts there during the season. This site is advantageous because a security service post existed there already in the past. Since 2015, regulations have softened with the introduction of the so called "single window" procedure. A joint post of customs, intelligence and immigration was established in Khab (near the influx of the Spiti river into Satluj). In addition to the obvious benefits accruing to traders who are now able to do all their paperwork in one place, the normal track taken to Shipki Pass runs parallel to Satluj, where an automobile serviceable army road was built (not through Namgia village). These days only the last part of the ascent to Shipki-la is still a mule track.

Traders come to the post with ready-made lists of goods to be exported including their quantity (counted in kilograms, litres, pieces or boxes, depending on kind) and including their value. Then the goods are unpacked and checked scrupulously with traders' personal IDs together with travel passes being cleared. Most traders are well known to officials because only a few dozen traders make the trip. Receiving the indispensable stamps they are able to start their trip to Tibet.

The reader should be aware that all of this activity is based on a list of strictly tradeable goods.

Table 2. Obligatory list of tax-free tradeable goods in border trade through chosen Himalayan passes.

Export FROM INDIA		
1. Agriculture implements 2. Blankets 3. Copper products 4. Clothes 5. Cycles 6. Coffee 7. Tea 8. Barley 9. Rice 10. Flour	11. Dry fruits 12. Dry and fresh vegetables 13. Vegetable oil 14. Gur and misri 15. Tobacco 16. Snuff 17. Spices 18. Shoes 19. Kerosene oil 20. Stationery	21. Utensils 22. Wheat (Ua& Buck) 23. Liquor 24. Milk processed products 25. Canned food 26. Cigarettes 27. Local herbs 28. Palm oil 29. Hardware
Export FROM INDIA cont. – List extension since May 2012		
30. Processed food 31. Flowers 32. Fruits 33. Spices	34. Readymade garments 35. Handicraft and handloom products 36. Religious products like	beads, prayer wheels, incense sticks and butter oil lamps 37. Local herbal medicines
Import FROM TIBET/CHINA		
1. Goat skin 2. Sheep skin 3. Wool 4. Raw silk 5. Yak tails	6. Yak hair 7. China clay 8. Borax 9. Seabelyipe (Szaibelyite) 10. Butter	11. Goat Kashmiri 12. Common salt 13. Horse 14. Goat 15. Sheep
Import FROM TIBET/CHINA cont. – List extension since May 2012		
16. Readymade garments 17. Shoes	18. Quilt/blankets 19. Carpets	20. Local herbal medicines

The above list is too important to leave uncommented upon. First of all, the process involved in its compilation is quite interesting. In the late 1980s, during Rajiv Gandhi's term of office as prime minister, India had fruitful bilateral talks and commissions with China. One of the outcomes was an agreement reached on the reactivation of

Himalayan trade. I can only suppose this was when the list of tradeable goods was established[13]. The problem lies in the anachronistic nature of it. For anyone with even a touch of familiarity with the history of trade in this part of the world it is obvious that it was compiled from mid-19th century sources. For a long time, Upper Kinnaur and the neighboring parts of Lahul and Spiti were neglected in an independent India but the situation was diametrically different at the beginning of the 1990s Who would be looking to import borax, salt or seabelyipe? Borax (sodium borate) was traded from Tibet even in early medieval times and was indispensable in the ceramic industry, steel manufacturing, medicine and black powder production. Salt (common salt is what it is referred to on the list) was in fact a selection of up to a dozen of varying kinds. Rock salt comes in different colours, from greyish, greenish to peach. Some salts were imported for animals as licking substances (greyish), and those of yellowish and peach color were recognized as most suitable for human consumption. This is no longer required after three decades of sealed borders and when cheap salt has become widely available from the Indian lowlands. The inclusion of seabelyipe (magnesium rock) on the list, in particular, garnered jokes among the inhabitants at the time of trade reactivation. Even the oldest of them could not in many instances recall what seabelyipe was[14]. For those who believe that in modern times common sense prevails they might be surprised to learn that without warning, in 2014, the Custom Commissionerate of the Union Ministry of Finance banned Chinese ceramic products based on an entirely new interpretation of the listed "China clay". This new vision consisted of clay in a raw state. It needs to be pointed out there is not even one single pottery manufacturer in Kinnaur, not to mention the complete absence of any modern ceramic factory. The question naturally arises who needs to trade with raw clay brought from China and what possible profit can be made from doing so.

Another good example of this present way of thinking is one more ban announced before the 2013 trading season concerning goats, sheep and horses. What is of interest is the legal basis emanating from the Livestock Importation Act 1898, restricting the present import "of horses and other equidaes through only four international ports at Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai". The document also mentions a lack of quarantine facilities in the vicinity of Shipki-la in regard to horses (see: *The Times of India*, August 13, 2013). I wonder how many officials in the aforementioned Commissionerate know what *equidae means*, and that adding "s" at the end does not make the word plural, because equidae is a plural noun which encompasses horses among other). The import of horses (limited in number) refers to Chhumurthi horses (also

[13] I have never found a single trace of the people responsible for the inclusion of certain items onto the formal list compiled by the Government of India.

[14] Tibet was and is renowned for mining many minerals and its sources are extensively exploited by the Chinese. Many of these are needed in India itself but border trade cannot be as competitive as large scale sea shipments. Besides, borax has, similar to fluorite, lost its value.

popularly called the Tibetan pony). These quite sturdy beasts are valuable in India, not only as pack animals but they are also ridden. Chhumurthi are recognized as one of the six indigenous Indian horse breeds and as such are protected by law. *Equidae* also include mules, which according to my estimates, about 60 have been imported since 1994[15]. In the last year before the ban (2012) nearly 2,000 goats along with a combined total of some 50 horses and sheep were imported.

Very interesting is the correlation between the import ban of animals from Tibet and the biodiversity on the Indian side of the Himalayas. All together crores of rupees have been spent to keep local breeds alive. According to Dr. Vinod Kumar Bodh, a veterinary officer from Keylong, "one of the most recent projects initiated is the State Animal Husbandry Department's, Chhumurthi Horse Breeding Farm located in Lari village of the Spiti Sub-division". This farm was moved in 2002 from Kamand (Mandi) but it is not the only initiative as Himachal Pradesh governmental units sponsor a number of projects such as the Network Project on Animal Genetic Resources Spiti Horse (in situ conservation unit). Within this one

> "each owner of the selected broodmares were provided incentives to the tune of INR 300/– per mare on the account of partial maintenance cost so that healthy progeny is born. Similarly, the owners of the selected male foals were provided incentives to the tune of INR 10,000/– per male so that healthy stallions could be reared for subsequent breeding use. Recently Govt. of India has sponsored a project called *Conservation of Spiti Ponnies in Himachal Pradesh* under 100% centrally sponsored schemes called *Conservation of threatened breeds of small ruminants, equines, pigs and camel*" (Bodh, n.d.).

Regrettably, the situation is very similar in regards to yaks, sheep and goats (breeds brought originally from Tibet). The Yak Breeding Farm in Kuppa (Baspa Valley, Kinnaur) ended its operations in 2004, after more than 30 years of no success, and the Free Range Yak Breeding project near Lata village (Chamoli Distt., Uttarakhand, near Nanda Devi Sanctuary) fared no better. Since the beginning of independence large sums of money have been spent to maintain Himalayan breeds but this has proved difficult without an injection of fresh blood. Undeniably, some decisions of the central government are contradictory to state policy (sponsored by the same Delhi agendas).

Undoubtedly, India is an enormous country with numerous problems resulting from its heavily hierarchized structure of administration and distance between the centres of power and local problems, even if local custom officers located near the border are aware of the indigenous people's needs. More on high level bureaucrats and their influence on crucial decisions taken in regard to border trading activities will be discussed later in the closing subsection.

---

[15] It is practically impossible to count precisely their number, because there were listed as horses. Estimated figures comes from personal interviews with traders.

HOW MUCH CAN BE EARNED ON TRADE?

Turning to the prices to be charged and profits reaped in Trans-Himalayan trade, it can be said that historically, the main imported good was wool and today it still maintains a strong position. Raw wool of average quality costs in Tibet around 700 INR (declared value). Good class wool can fetch as much as 1,500 INR, and superior pure pashmina up to 2500 INR per kg. Thus profits on wool can be up to 1000% but traders are faced with numerous obstacles, bans, short seasons and bureaucracy which have to be overcome. Prices in Tibet have been increasing over the last number of years. In 2011, raw wool could be bought for 30 INR per kg and selling it in India for a sum 10 times larger was not a particular problem. For good quality goat's wool the trader could reap profits of even 30 times the basic price. Despite higher prices average profit remains almost the same. The main reason for the increase of local Tibetan prices for wool is the activity of government and private agencies who are buying it. In this case, demand exceeds possible supply but the price offered by Indian partners is one which is difficult to be beaten by the Chinese. Additionally, in this kind of trading partnership it is not only economic reasons which need to be taken into account but also political and social ones.

Livestock is still in a great demand in the Indian highlands. During the last season before the ban, a goat (the most favorable Chigu breed) cost between 1800–2000 INR (2012) in Tibet. Similar prices were paid for sheep but for Chamurthi horses (ponies) prices of even between 7500–8000 INR (2012) could be fetched. Goats and sheep can bring in profits of 200–250% whilst that from a good horse as much as 500–600%. The animals are sold directly to private breeders through personal purchase orders or during big local fairs such as Lavi Mela in Rampur (October) and Reckong Peo (November) each year. Originally, Lavi Mela was organized always in November, after the harvest and at the end of the trading season but only in Rampur, the capital of the Rampur-Bushahr principality. Its history dates back to the second half of 17th century, although possibly a much longer genealogy may be involved. The organization of a second Lavi Mela in Reckong Peo (before the Rampur one in October) is a new idea of the local authorities in order to boost the local economy and it has been in existence since 2006.

From the list of historical trading items, some yak tails are still being brought but demand is limited to Buddhist, Hindu and local Devtas religious purposes such as those practiced in home ceremonies. A market is also provided by tourists. In 2015, the price at the border was about 2200 INR per kg. In addition, some yak hair is imported and mainly used for ropes and tents but nowadays yak hair is usually a cover for yak wool, because the latter is not listed. Although rare, yak wool (worsted) is superior to both sheep and similarly called Cashmere. At the entry point, it is priced 600–800 INR per kg (almost the same price as for sheep wool). For such items profits of three to fourfold are possible to acquire. Newly permissible trading articles since

2012 have also found favour, expressly when banned livestock had to be replaced. These include shoes, jackets, blankets, carpets and T-shirts mainly. On such goods profits of 200–300% are achievable.

Export items form a much longer list and from traditional goods some *gur* and *misri* (unrefined sugar), spices, tobacco, cigarettes and rice together with barley is being traded, as well as dry fruits and vegetable oil (mostly of the mustard variety), biscuits, copper utensils, brass ones, occasionally also factory-produced agricultural tools and locally made ones. Indian traders do not take fresh apples with them (late season is fruit harvest time) because Tibetans have their own apple trees.

Examples of singular trade trips (prior to 2013) included that of 100 kg of *gur*, a number of big tarpaulins (so called *tirpal*) plus mustard oil in cans (160 litres), all together worth merely 7000 INR which were traded for 20 goats worth in India at least 40,000 INR. During interviews[16] with Indian traders it turns out that most of them take goods on order for particular families (households). In such cases a few bags of onions, flour and spices are included in a single shift.

What is quite surprising is that from 2013 onwards, a considerable amount of woolen carpets have been exported to Tibet and there has been a good market for them. Since almost time immemorial they have been brought from such big centres as Gartok and Shigatse. The same situation holds true with Indian tea. Nowadays, just a handful of families still use the famous Chinese brick tea and make *chha* (Kinnauri), *ghurghur* (Ladakhi) or butter tea out of it. Most of the Kinnauris used to take cheap Indian tea instead. Now in regard to the export of good quality Indian tea to Tibet it is most probably the effect of contemporary higher living standards there[17]. This corresponds to present similar demand for the best quality Indian rice in Tibet. Buyers are not interested in the basic brands of rice when they have open access to Chinese types.

Today's border exports from India are mostly made up of spices, oil, processed and canned food, mostly dried fruits (apricots, almonds, apples), tea, snuff, cigarettes, cotton textiles (*dhotis*, blankets and carpets), metal utensils, handloom shawls (woolen), pressure cookers, *gur*, *misri*, jaggery (unrefined sugar cane), wrist watches (not many), some ayurvedic medicines and biscuits. The bestselling spice in the seasons 2016 and 2017 was saffron (*kesar* in Hindi). The latter is a good example of local resourcefulness.

---

[16] After 20 years of research in the Himalayas I still do not know which kind of data could be regarded as sensitive. Contacts with security service men and ITBP officers (Indian Tibetan Border Policy) have convinced me that the situation is worsening. Suspicion is the basis of everyday interaction. In order to avoid any problem, theirs or mine, I have decided to not disclose the names of my interviewees, informants nor their dwelling places, because traders form a small group and it does not take much to locate them.

[17] Preferred brands of tea is a complicated subject. In this paper I do not refer directly to the history of tea imports/exports on parts of the Silk Road. All I have to say on the subject is that the British did not succeed in exporting Indian tea to Tibet mainly because of its high price.

While the best quality wool is traded with Punjabi and Kashmiri merchants, saffron is part of an exchange transaction. Undoubtedly, quality-wise is average but still it is a valuable commodity. Bought for 20–40 INR per gram, it is worth from five to ten times more on the other side of the border.

Imports from Tibet after the ban on livestock consist of raw wool, jackets, shoes, blankets and some carpets. Such an exemplary deal consists 3 pair of trousers (500 INR each[18]), 2 jackets (1500 INR each), 12 T-shirts (250 INR each), 4 pairs of shoes (750 INR each), 16 pairs of shoes (250 INR each) and 10 kg of raw wool (1200 INR per kg). This comes to a grand total of 26 500 INR. Possible profits in such cases amount to three or fourfold. Most of the single imports do not exceed 50 000 INR, and some do not even manage to reach 20 000. Only a limited number of traders specialize in the importation of good wool or expensive carpets and in such cases a single import can be worth 2 to 3 lakhs (custom value at the border).

JOURNEY

Most contemporary traders come from villages near the border such as Namgia, Dobbaling, Dobling, Tashigang and Pooh. Because of their proximity to the Shipki-la and the necessity of clearing goods in the custom office in Khab, the journeys are made on foot in the company of pack animals (mostly mules). As less and less people are rearing them, they often need to be hired. A single mule costs about 500 INR per day, and for every herd of 7–8 mules one helper has to be hired as well for 300–400 INR per day.

Once the packs are cleared through customs, they will be no longer inspected. Depending on whether the mules are hired in Khab or Namgia, loads can be transported by jeep on this part of the trip (from the village to Khab or to Namgia). If the trader is going with his own animals, the whole journey is done on foot. A good mule can be loaded with 80, 90 or even 100 kg, depending on its strength and sturdiness. A minimum of fodder for the animals is taken, because they can graze on lands they pass, and time must be always put aside for it as it is imperative that mules stay in good shape. Then fodder can be obtained in Shipki village on Tibetan side. Trips take approximately 3 hours from Namgia to the border and an additional one and a half hours from the pass to Shipki. It takes a toll on people and animals alike. Traders go together in small groups (2–3 traders, mules and helpers together). From a logistic point of view it is not advantageous to form big groups anymore. It happened only in the history to protect themselves from the attack of both robbers and carnivorous hunting beasts.

The present marketplace is located in the vicinity of Shipki village. It consists of a simple unfurnished guest house. Traders from India take sleeping bags, rugs and

[18] Prices in brackets of declared value.

cooking utensils with them. Local people come to greet traders and there is always a cheery welcome and traders are helped in the unpacking of their animals. The mules are also taken care of and fodder during their stay is provided free of charge by Tibetan *panchayat*[19], because it is important for them that trade be maintained. The guest house is open to all traders and again free of charge.

When the loads are opened the Custom Officer comes to inspect, usually pocketing 2% of the value of the goods as a bribe. Trans-Himalayan trade is tax-free but these matters are not discussed. If this specific duty is already paid in goods (the custom officer takes what he likes within limits), he then disappears for good. This is the only time when contact is made with Chinese officials. When, from time to time, any army or police officers come, time is spent talking, joking and drinking. Custom official do not ask for passports or any other documents.

Traders report feeling safe in Tibet and have built up relationships over decades, besides of some existing family ties. Since 2014, traders have been confined to the market area only. Prior to this time they were able to freely roam around, visiting dozens of villages to find better prices for their goods. Just after trade had been re-activated they were able to go as far as Gartok, selling items directly in the big market.

The duration of a trader's stay in Tibet is extremely important because it corresponds to the potential profit emanating from it. Not every item for exchange is ready and traders often have to wait. Although most trading partners come from Shipki and the neighboring Kyuku villages[20], some goods have to be come directly from Lhasa (a 3 day journey). In such eventualities allowing oneself a 5-day-stay is cutting things a bit fine. As long as Indian traders stay near the marketplace, Chinese officials do not care how long their visits lasts. Only Indian officers pay attention to the non-extendible time limit. Accommodation in Shipki market place is simple but free. Everything else is paid for with goods, small amounts of *gur*, *misri*, coconuts, or any other tiny items. Tibetans offer *thukpa* (Tibetan soup) and *chowmien* (Chinese noodles), tea or coffee. Basic food supplies of food are brought by the Indian traders themselves.

Trading practices have to be started with polite talk about anything, including families, present crops, animals, weather and so on. Then time needs to be available for tea and other refreshments. Then packs are leant over and the quality of the fare on offer is inspected with many questions being asked and many comments shared together with complaints about rising prices. Final negotiations are vivid but short. Within a few minutes prices are settled, both in Chinese yuans and Indian rupees, although Indian traders do not have any currency on them, neither of the Indian or Chinese variety. And it is the moment to trace the issue related to barter in an eco-

---

[19] Local self-government based on the traditional panchayat system (from *paanch*-five representatives).
[20] It is not a densely populated area. Besides the aforementioned Shipki and Kyuku there are only a few other villages in the vicinity.

nomic and thought sense. What happens in Shipki border trade should not be called barter. Both sides involved counting in mind in their present currency, so it is a basic proof of cash and relevant currency economy, despite of the practice of exchanging goods as equivalents. Only final transactions are carried out as barter. This can be viewed as a relic of the past, a transitional stage, because most everyday dealings have been made in cash for decades.

The finalizing of the transaction depends on the situation. If the goods for exchange are ready, all can be completed within two days. Sometimes, however, there is a need to wait for the products as some of the goods are not available locally and so have to be brought from distant markets. Situations also arise where goods are required to be collected a bit longer than the allowed duration of stay in Shipki. In such scenarios trading partners pick up their order during their next visit. Trust is therefore of utmost importance and some features of the historical *gamgya* partnership can still be seen here. Originally, such trust (*gamgya*) meant establishing indissoluble relationships with a person's trading partner and his extended family for generations. In the past, a *gamgya* partnership was an unbreakable trust. An initial ceremony took place which involved the fracturing of a piece of wood or stone into two parts. Each of these were preserved by the partners' family and the exchange value of goods was established and kept for generations. To seal the friendship, a shared bowl of local wine with some golden sand was drunk. Since these times, all any trader has to do is show his piece of *gamgya*, and if matching the second part, it means that he is one who can be trusted and obliged to keep the promise of exchange. Usually *gamgya* families were trading only among themselves. Such a partnership allows trading partners to stay freely at each other's homes, receive supplies and fodder for their animals and additionally be viewed as a real family member.

During their trading activities and free time, traders and their associates discuss the matter of the future needs of both sides, both in terms of quality and quantity. All of this establishes the foundations for the next agreement. Nowadays, the best way of staying in touch would be by mobile but this mode of communication needs to be used very cautiously. The making of one call when both people are from near the border is safe enough but more calls may arouse the suspicions of security officials. Furthermore, it is said that calls made across the border from a distance can be freely made. Undoubtedly, if the opportunity existed to make several calls to partners at the marketplace in Shipki many problems would be eased. I wonder also how far this trust reaches during trading. I was assured that goods collected from local Tibetans usually are checked on the spot but commodities brought from Lhasa do not need to be examined. This comes about from the establishment of trust which has been built up over the course of many years, with standard always kept. Such loads are prepared for shipment and packed until their return journey.

WHO IS A TRANS-HIMALAYAN TRADER TODAY?

Above all, traders do not belong to the poorest sections of society as their activities require substantial funds, connections, along with certain mental and physical capabilities. It is important to possess a knowledge of the Tibetan language. In spite of the fact that Kinnauri is similar to Tibetan, it is impossible to communicate with it on the other side of the border. Almost every trader belongs to a Scheduled Tribe category, but it is not a mark of identification because in this area most of the locals are Kinnauris. Most traders are middle-aged with only a handful of young people interested in continuing this work. If they wish to carry on, they have to start accompanying their fathers or uncles and build up the necessary trust required. This stage is a precondition for future contacts. Additionally, this "schooling" interval is needed to garner the necessary indispensable experience. Many young people totally lack the required skills and even possessing knowledge of the local language in Kinnaur can be problematic for them. I had a talk with such a youth, who had returned well educated after years in Delhi. To people who addressed him in Kinnauri, he answered in Hindi. When I asked him why, he replied that he felt ashamed to answer in the local vernacular, because 'his' Kinnauri was rooted in his early childhood and thus he was only able to converse in a childish way.

The substantial trading trips do not seem like such an onerous challenge but they are still potentially dangerous. At such heights, the weather can change dramatically within minutes. Also, there is much to be learnt about the goods, their quality, packing procedure, animal-care and how to protect oneself on the road. To gain sufficient knowledge only about wool requires years of practice. Generally, the younger generation are not attracted by the trade. As was already said, they come from relatively well-to-do families and such parents usually invest in the education of their children. Many of them study in boarding schools, and then further their education in cities. The world is their oyster and many of them dream about careers in governmental service and not of their lives as farmers and breeders, who occasionally go to Tibet to earn extra income.

Other reasons for undertaking a passage to Tibet need to be separated from economic ones. Many Kinnauris living in the border belt have relatives in Tibet[21]. The trading season affords them the opportunity to visit them and to have ample time to talk freely. In addition, trading is an activity deeply rooted in the history of the region and thereby is closely related to the pride of being Kinnauri, pride in one's local identity

---

[21] Although such ties come from past generations, they are still close. The biggest fairs hold in Rampur, Lavi Mela, gave an opportunity to find a bride from Tibetan side (in fact to conclude an agreement with her father). Consequently there are some families who's grandmas or great grandmas came from Tibet and their relatives are aware of it.

and their distinctiveness from lowland people and other Himalayan groups. It is also connected with the present stage of the brahminisation process. Basically, Buddhists are not respected and regarded as equals in their own territory. This is heightened and easily observable during the seasonal visits made by Indian tourists (mostly high class ones from West Bengal and Maharashtra) and by apple and generally fruit contractors along with sometimes even government officials. This is another wide and complex problem and openly most of these visitors will deny any accusations of their behaviour, but they stick to themselves and limit any talks with locals to the bare minimum. The matter is complicated further by the national policies of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) leadership, through their advocation of vegetarianism by all "good Hindus" and so on[22].

FUTURE IDEAS AND PROSPECTS

Local government officials are aware of the importance of keeping Trans-Himalayan trade alive. Most of them that I had the opportunity to meet impressed me with their competence. Lack of competence increases the further one goes from the border. Geographical knowledge is weak, names are misspelt, awareness of local weather conditions is non-existent and bureaucracy slows down everything. India loves having a huge administrative apparatus and their officials love to be begged for every detail. I mean here mostly this "feudal hierarchy" as an integral part of a line of thought.

My words may appear to be very harsh but for vibrant trade to flourish it is imperative that the best possible communication exist between the local and the centre and speed is essential. It is unacceptable to wait for an answer from Delhi for a year or two or to receive no answer at all if this suits high ranking officials. The gulf between Delhi and local governments is unimaginatively enormous.

There are things which could be done to enhance the situation without the necessity for huge outlays. There are some ideas being shared between local authorities, traders and scientists working in this field. One of them is to open access to border trade to all the inhabitants of Kinnaur. The prospect of "open borders" for every Indian citizen is unrealistic, although it was promised for 2012, then delayed to 2014, and now the matter seems to be shrouded in silence. If border trading for every Kinnauri is a step too far then maybe for the inhabitants from the area starting from Reckong Peo upstream of the Sutlej (Kalpa Block) it could become a reality.

Language courses of basic Tibetan could be organized for potential traders-to be. This would only take just a number of weeks, because only smatter knowledge of

[22] I am not writing here about the grey and black markets, semi-legal dealings, and trading practices which exist through theoretically closed entry points to Tibet (among a few others Loma in Nyoma Block, Ladakh, and Kaurik at Kinnaur and Spiti border).

terms, expressions and numerals is needed (not literary language). Going hand in hand with this some information could be disseminated about the area, people, customs and behaviour. Present traders are not afraid of competition and most greet potential traders-to be with open arms as they believe the greater their number the more likely their voices will be better heard, even in Delhi.

Some trader demands have been formulated by themselves and sent through official channels. The extension of the list of tradable, tax free goods tops the list and in particular the restoration of animal imports. It was said the veterinary post with quarantine facilities would be located in the Chuppan area (a deserted village in fact)[23]. At present, the Indian Army has returned this area to the local authorities with the promise that a veterinary post would be opened in 2017 but the actual date of opening remains uncertain to the present. When finally the post and market place in Chuppan are ready to receive their first Tibetan traders, it will bring to an end a story which began at the beginning of border trade reactivation in 1994 or even before that if the preparatory process is taken into account.

The bilateral talks between Indian and Chinese government officials regarding the reactivation of border trade started in 1988 leading to a *Memorandum Between the Government of the PRC and the Government of India on the Resumption of Border Trade* being signed on December 13th, 1991. It turned out that it was impossible to open Lipulekh the same year and a similar state of affairs arose with the opening of Shipki-la. The document entitled *Protocol Between The Government of the PRC and the Government of India for Extension of Border Trade Across Shipkila Pass* was signed (as effective from the date) on September 7th, 1993 but again no possibility to open trade existed in 1993. Lipulekh was proposed to initiate the process with Shipki-la chosen to follow suit. From the very initial stages, the Himachal Pradesh state government was fully aware of the need to prepare the market place on the Indian side. Nothing was done in this matter for over two decades. The truth of the matter is that Delhi and Shimla (as centres of the decision making process) did not make the slightest move in building the prerequisite market, endowed with all necessary buildings: a security service branch, a custom and veterinary post, a guest house, and so on. When nothing was done for years in this direction, every official report or journal article contained the statement that so far no single Tibetan trader has crossed the border. The truth was that there was no place for him to go as no procedures had been established and there was no place to stay or no place to trade ready to receive him on Indian soil. In this matter it is unfair to lay all the blame on the Chinese for not allowing Tibetans to go to India for trading purposes. It is interesting to note that a very similar abandonment

[23] Quite interesting is the background to the present problem in regards to the opening of the market place in Chuppan. It is located some 6 kms from Namgia village, in the direction of Shipki Pass. Once the place was given to the Army the main opposition to handing it back were Army officials.

from previous arrangements could be observed in the Pithoragarh area. According to the *Protocol established between the Government of the PRC and the Government of India on Entry and Exit Procedures for Border Trade* signed on July 1st, 1992, both sides were obliged to establish market places at Pulan (Purang, Tibet) and Gunji (India), but the latter has never been opened.

The next problem occurring which dates from 1994 (1992 in Lipulekh's case) involves when the trading season is announced by the central government every year. In compliance with earlier bilateral documents, the trading season was scheduled for just four months, from 1st of June to 30th of September each year (the relevant section is article 2 of the above mentioned Protocol on Entry and Exit Procedures). Only ten years ago, the closing date was shifted to the end of November but this has proved to be not long enough as due to global climate changes, abnormal conditions have surfaced in the Himalayan region. In some years the Shipki-la stays free of snow until mid or almost to the end of December. Autumn is generally considered to be the best time for undertaking trade activities as this is the off-season in agriculture and after the apple harvest. Starting earlier would be open to negotiation as in some years Shipki Pass is accessible for the whole of May. Maintaining strict fixed dates is unwise as border trade is profitable not only for particular families but also for the whole district. Flexibility in dates requires no financial burden on the state economy as all the work is done by the traders themselves.

It seems that Chuppan market place will start operations, maybe in 2018 or a bit later. To fully utilize this prospect, a proper road should exist to it. If this came to pass, then Indian traders would be able to transport their goods by jeep directly to godawns (warehouses). This would make the activity easier, less dangerous, less strenuous, more profitable and attract more Kinnauris. More attention needs to be paid in thinking about the younger generation in order to attract new groups of traders who will be able to continue this activity in the future.

Additionally, the local authorities through their state government should keep up pressure on the Chinese in the hope of persuading them to open a new route for the National Kailash-Manasarovar Yatra to the holy place situated in Western Tibet (Ngari Province) just along the trade routes in Kinnaur[24]. So far the Chinese authorities have proved skeptical about this idea but it is possible that if the case for a pilgrimage route and a border trade are combined and the issue is stressed at every available opportunity then a solution may be found.

Possibilities also exist to open Chuppan as a local attraction for Indian and foreign tourists (under special permit conditions) and to start bilateral talks with the Chinese about how to open a tourist route to Western Tibet through Shipki-la. I can imagine

---

[24] The National Kailash-Manasarovar Yatra (pilgrimage) is organised from Pithoragarh along the Indian – Nepalese border and enters Tibet passing the Lipulekh Pass (see Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2013, 143–154).

that such an idea would cause headaches for both army headquarters but such concerns could be abated by, for example, indicating one or several permissible roads crossing the most sensitive areas. Another idea might be to open other Himalayan passes for border trade. Such initiatives are well known[25] but to date no results have been forthcoming. Two passes which offer interesting potential must also be mentioned. For Kinnauris, it will be essential to legally open Kaurik. This would simplify operations for the inhabitants living in the Upper Kinnaur area, with Nako and Chango as main villages. So far the area is more renowned for the smuggling of pashmina and *shantoosh*[26] than trade (see: Bisht 2011). The second pass is Jelep-la in West Bengal[27].

The closing ideas are of a practical nature and were garnered during my talks with traders. Some of them have already been the subject of demands expressed openly and forwarded to the state government through the trade authorities in Reckong Peo. The intelligence clearing procedures are understood and should be applied but the question then arises why the validity of travel passes should be limited to one season. A recognized trader should be in a position to obtain the document for a number of years. Another trading obstacle which could be eliminated is to allow trading partners on both sides of the border to communicate by phone without this drawing suspicion on them.

The main trading item is still wool of varying kinds and qualities and this needs to be realized with further investments in programs to boost the local industry being undertaken. This would not be easy to introduce, but selling unprocessed wool is a huge loss of revenue for the district. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Punjabi and Kashmiri handloom fabrics are superior to any in Kinnaur and they are the main consignees of wool. Quality reaps financial rewards. To introduce fine handlooms in Kinnaur was once an important issue for the Moravian Brethren mission in the 1880s (see: Beszterda 2013). During those times they imported dozens of handlooms directly from Kashmir, together with skilled masters of the craft. Not much of this art remains in Kinnaur[28] but perhaps it is time that it be revived.

---

[25] Rajya Sabha, Question no. 323 to the Minister of External Affairs from 01.03.2007: "(b) if so, whether other passes i.e. Chola/Tangkar La/Funkarru La/Gore La/Kongra La/Nakoo La and Choroniyana La on Indo-Tibet border are also proposed to be opened".

[26] *Shantoosh* is a common name for the wool of the Tibetan antelope, Chiru. Its trade is totally prohibited worldwide due to its potential extinction.

[27] The case of Jelep-la is very significant in the present stage of border trade. Due to its proximity to Kalimpong it was the most intensely used pass in the history of border trade. It is accessible almost year round, is easy to ascend and is joined by road with the main towns. It offers a ready-made solution. Political reasons play the main role behind the non-action. I hope more publications like: Diki Sherpa, *Sino-Indian Border Trade: The Promise of Jelep La*, ICS Analysis, No. 45, 2017, will change decision makers' way of thinking.

[28] I am aware of the presence of various sustainable development organizations which are making woolen products, as well as manufactories in Kullu and Chamba, but still none of their products can be compared with fine Kashmiri pashmina shawls.

And finally we come to the list of tradable goods. Debates on extending the present list should be constantly held. All that is required is to persuade the central Indian government, because the Chinese have an open view on the list. In fact, this is the crux of the matter as China would like to allow all products to be traded but the Indian side is afraid of tax free Chinese items flooding them. Seasonable trends call for flexibility. At the moment the inclusion of electronic items on the list would be a welcome development.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B e s z t e r d a R. 2013. *Moravian Brethren and Himalayan Cultures*. Delhi.

B e s z t e r d a R. 2014. Trans-border trade between India and Tibet (China) through Shipki Pass, Kinnaur District, Himachal Pradesh, India. In A. Posern-Zieliński and L. Mróz (eds.), *Middle Grounds, Ambiguous Frontiers and Intercultural Spaces*. Poznań, 117–134.

B e s z t e r d a R. 2015. The Shipki la and its Place in Crossborder Trade Between India and Tibet. *The Tibet Journal. The Publication for the Study of Tibet*. XL (2 Autumn/Winter). Dharamsala, 239–259.

B i s h t G. 2011. Cross border smuggling on the rise in the Indo-China border. *The Hindustan Times*. 7. Nov. 2011.

B o d h V. K. n.d. *Evolution of the Chhumurthi/Spiti Horse*. http://hpagrisnet.gov.in/hpagris/Fisheries/ animal%20hus/chamurthi.pdf. Access: 10.11.2017.

C e n s u s o f I n d i a. 2011. Himachal Pradesh.Series-03 Part XII-B. District Census Handbook. Kinnaur, Village and Town Wise. Primary Census Abstract (PCA). Directorate of Census Operations. Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.

T h e T i m e s o f I n d i a. August 13, 2013.

U r b a ń s k a - S z y m o s z y n A. 2013. Political determinants of Indian pilgrimages to Mount Kailas and Manasarovar Lake. *EthnologiaPolona. Ethnography Re(dis)covered* Vol. 33–34: 2012–2013, 143–154.

Indo-Chinese bilateral documents:

Trade Agreement Between the Republic of India and the People's Republic of China, signed 14 October 1954 in New Delhi /Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India.
http://mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/7721/Trade+Agreement. Access: 16.07.2016.

Memorandum Between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of India on the Resumption of Border Trade, signed 13.12.1991.http://en.pkulaw.cn/display. aspx?cgid=100668666&lib=tax. Access: 19.09.2016.

Protocol Between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of India on Entry and Exit Procedures for Border Trade, signed 01 July 1992.http://en.pkulaw.cn/display. aspx?cgid=100669655&lib=tax. Access: 19.09.2016.

Protocol Between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of the Republic of India for Extension of the Border Trade Across Shipkila Pass, signed 07.09.1993.http://en.pkulaw.cn/ display.aspx?cgid=100664643&lib=tax.Access: 19.09.2016.

*Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquility along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Area*s, signed September 7, 1993. /UN Nations Documents Repository.https://peacemaker. un.org/chinaindia-borderagreement93. Access: 16.07.2016.

Handbook of Procedures (Vol. I). 27th August 2009–31st March 2014 w.e.f. 05.06.2012.Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce, Government of India.

Public Notice No. 7 /2015–2020, Amendments in para 2.07 (a) (iv).In *Handbook of Procedures* (2015–2020) which lists categories of importers and exporters exempted from obtaining an Importer-Exporter Code (IEC). Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Department of Commerce, Govt. of India.1st May, 2015.http://dgft.gov.in/exim/2000/policy/ftp-plcontent-1011.htm. Access: 19.09.2016.

Handbook of Procedures.1st April, 2015–31st March, 2020. Updated up to 04.08.2015. Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Department of Commerce Government of India.
http://dgft.gov.in/exim/2000/policy/ftp-plcontent-1011.htm. Access: 19.09.2016.

Author's address:

Rafal Beszterda, Ph.D.
Dept. of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology
Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, Poland
ul. Wladyslawa Bojarskiego 1
87-100 Toruń, POLAND
e-mail: rbeszterda@gmail.com

The old trade road to Tibet. Sutlej River Valley near Pooh, Kinnaur, 2016. Photo: R. Beszterda.

REMARKS ON THE LESSER-KNOWN FOUNDERS
OF THE MYTH OF TIBET

PIOTR KLAFKOWSKI

INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY, UNIVERSITY OF SZCZECIN, POLAND

This article presents three writers from the 20th century who are the lesser-known founders of the popular myth of Tibet: Baird T. Spalding (1872–1953), Edwin John Dingle (1881–1972) and Theodore Illion (1898?–1984) who also went by the name of Theodor Burang or Theodor Nolling. They are not as well-known as Helena P. Blavatsky, Alexandra David Nèel and Cyril Henry Hoskin; the latter known as Lobsang Rampa, but their contributions to Tibet as it is today, especially in regard to so called oriental spirituality in popular culture, is significant. They created an imagined Tibet in their works. Spalding knew nothing of India and Tibet and he was wrong in almost every detail mentioned. Dingle did not mention any Tibetan details at all and it is Theodore Illion in his *In Secret Tibet* who seems to be the most authentic of the three. In my article I posit the question whether Spalding and Dingle simply wanted to share with others their interpretations of Christianity dressed up in an Oriental disguise.

*   *   *

Artykuł przedstawia trzech pisarzy z XX wieku, mniej znanych twórców popularnego mitu o Tybecie: Bairda T. Spaldinga (1872–1953), Edwina Johna Dingle (1881–1972) i Theodora Illiona (1898?–1984), który jest znany również jako Theodor Burang lub Theodor Nolling. Nie są tak popularni, jak Helena P. Bławatska, Alexandra David Nèel i Cyril Henry Hoskin, ostatni znany jako Lobsang Rampa, ale ich wkład w obecny obraz Tybetu, zwłaszcza tak zwanej orientalnej duchowości, w kulturze popularnej jest znaczący. Tworzyli wyobrażony Tybet w swoich dziełach, co więcej: oczywiste jest, że Spalding nie wiedział nic o Indiach i Tybecie i mylił się przy prawie każdym szczególe, o którym pisał, a Dingle w ogóle nie umieszczał żadnych tybetańskich detali. Theodore Illion w swoim *Tajemnym Tybecie* wydaje się być najbardziej bliski rzeczywistości. W moim artykule postawiłem hipotezę, że Spalding i Dingle po prostu chcieli podzielić się z innymi swoimi własnymi interpretacjami chrześcijaństwa, ale w orientalnym przebraniu.

K e y w o r d s: Tibet, orientalism, Baird T. Spalding, Edwin John Dingle, Theodore Illion, popular culture, esoteric philosophy.

INTRODUCTION[1]

For a long time, researchers have been studying the image of Tibet in popular Western culture (see, for example, Bishop 1989, Lopez 1999, Dodin and Räther 2001, Bray 2009, BNeuhaus 2012). In this article, however, I focus on 3 characters only who

have left their mark on this phenomenon. The aim of this paper is to present three writers whose works have contributed to the development of the myth of Tibet: Baird T. Spalding, Edwin John Dingle, and Theodore Illion.[2]

The works of "Tuesday Lobsang Rampa", that is Cyril Henry Hoskin (1910–1981), whose debut piece *The Third Eye* (1956) proved to be the first volume of a series, have become so famous that they pushed few earlier cases, with a similar nature, almost into oblivion. Hoskin was an excellent storyteller and it is my belief that Lobsang Rampa (see Lopez 1999) is comparable only to Karl May (1842–1912), the creator of Winnetou and Old Shatterhand (unforgettable heroes to a number of generations. Both Karl May and Lobsang Rampa have done trojan good work in attracting countless readers all over the world to the plight of their heroes. At one time, Lobsang Rampa's books were available literally everywhere – in the bookstalls of railway stations, bus terminals, airports, markets and shopping arcades and all-purpose stores – and therefore even casual readers could learn about the conquest and occupation of Tibet by China. However, the popularity of his books has overshadowed the works of a similar nature by others and thus this present paper is an attempt to recast anew a light on three such cases.

Helena P. Blavatsky (1831–1891), the founder of modern Theosophy, was probably the first person who claimed to have visited Tibet and studied under the guidance of the Mahatmas. Blavatsky's *opus magnum, The Secret Doctrine* (1888), claims to be a commentary on the *Stanzas of Dzyan*, described as the world's oldest book[3]. A sample of the alleged original given by Blavatsky is full of words that are Tibetan or seem to be Tibetan (*Secret Doctrine* 1 1971, 87). Blavatsky's trip to Tibet has been questioned by scholars, though it seems probable she did visit Ladakh, known as "Little Tibet" at that time.

No such question marks are attached to the travels and works of Alexandra David Nèel (1868–1969), whose numerous books in French leave no doubt that she did live in Tibet and knew the Tibetan language very well. Her book *Mystiques et Magiciens du Tibet* from 1929 (The English title is *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*) is of particular importance and worthy of further consideration.

² One of the best sources on the myths of subterranean cities of Central Asia see: Bernbaum 1980.
³ Helena Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine, the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy* written in 6 volumes is a work known by many but read by few. This is the fundamental work of modern Theosophy. Her first work: *Isis Unveiled, a Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern science and Theology* (vol. I *Science*, vol. II *Theology. Quest Books*) (Blavatsky. Ed. Boris de Zirkoff. 1994 new edition. Illinois and Chennai-Madras) remains, in many ways, even more interesting than *The Secret Doctrine*. Its stated aim is the defense of the ancient Hermetic philosophy in both its scientific and theological aspects (vol. I, vii), and it proves the author was well-read in the field.

Whatever else can be said about Madame Blavatsky, of no doubt is the fact that she made Indian philosophy interesting to the so-called "common man" and not only to a small group of Sanskrit scholars and philosophers. Madame Blavatsky's work was a blueprint for other writers in spiritual matters to follow. This paper discusses three such followers: Baird T. Spalding (1872–1953), Edwin John Dingle (1881–1972) and Theodore Illion (1898?–1984).

BAIRD SPALDING

Baird T. Spalding 1872–1953[4]

Baird Spalding, real name Bayard Thomas Spaulding[5], claimed to have been born in England in 1857, but it is now known that he was born in North Cohocton (New York state) in 1872. Spalding was an engineer specializing in mining who spent some years searching for gold in the Yukon; he also worked as an engineer in Alaska, California and the American West. He claimed at times that he was born in India, that his grandfather was from India, and that he had studied in Heidelberg, Germany, for some years. There are many stories about him in circulation but none have been substantiated.

---

[4] Promo Picture circa 1920? https://www.librarything.com/author/spaldingbairdt. Access: 05.10.2017.
[5] See: www.bairdtspalding.org. Access: 10.11.2016.

Spalding catapulted to fame almost overnight in 1924 with a book entitled *Life and Teaching of the Masters of the Far East* (Spalding 2002), which eventually spawned a six-volume series (vol. 2, 1926; vol. 3, 1935; vol. 4, 1950; vol. 5, 1955? and vol. 6, 1996?). Precise dates for the last two volumes are uncertain, but what is known is that they were published posthumously. Post 1924, Spalding devoted the rest of his life to writing and lecturing, travelling to India in 1935, his only documented trip to that country. He died of heart attack in 1953.

Spalding claimed that he was a member of a secret scientific expedition to India and Tibet in 1894, in which 11 scientists participated. The aim of the expedition was to meet the Oriental masters of esoteric sciences, document their existence and activities, and learn as much as possible of their wisdom. In India, Spalding became acquainted with a man whom he called Emil, who turned out to be a Master. It is not known why Spalding decided to refer to him as Emil but maybe some clue may be gleaned by the fact that the name "Emil" derives from the Latin *aemulus* which means "rival, rivaling" and that *Aemilius* was the name of one of the oldest and most important noble houses of ancient Rome.

Spalding does not recount where exactly he encountered Emil, but he hints it was a city in Southern India. Emil seems to have had prior knowledge of both Spalding as a man and the purpose of the expedition, and he helped the group to travel to Northern India, and eventually to Tibet and Persia. In Tibet, Emil guided the expedition to some secret temples where the Masters live (as they are immortal). There the expedition met Jesus Christ in person and listened to his teachings and were also afforded the opportunity to meet the Buddha, who accompanied Christ. This fills the first three volumes of the work and forms a continuous narrative. Volume IV is a series of teaching texts, each supplemented with advice to the teacher. Volumes V and VI – compiled by his editors after Spalding's death – present a collection of short papers on various topics, each concluding with *Questions and Answers.* Vol. VI also contains several photographs.

Spalding was very careful never to say clearly where they had actually been and most of the places he mentioned by name do not appear on any maps. In a number of places, the legendary kingdom of Shambala is mentioned, indicating Spalding was familiar with Madame Blavatsky's writings. She referred to the name several times and in the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine* and located it in the Gobi Desert.

The teachings presented by Spalding echo the American New Thought Movement[6] that began with Phineas Quimby (1802–1866), and is probably best reflected in the doctrines of the *Christian Science Church* founded by Mary Baker Eddy (1821–1910)[7]. Their main teachings were the divine character of man; the primacy of the mind; the necessity of faith in God and oneself; the unlimited potential of man once he realizes

[6] See: https://www.britannica.com/event/New-Thought. Access: 05.10.2017.
[7] See: https://www.christianscience.com/. Access: 05.10.2017.

his/her mind's limitations can be overcome; the possibility of direct contact between man and God; the essential goodness of man; the power of will and positive thinking, faith in progress towards a better and more just world, and the approaching new epoch in which man will rise again to spiritual heights under the guidance of the Masters[8].

Spalding's work bears no comparison with the work of Nicolai Notovitch (1858–1916?) *La vie inconnuè de Jesus Christ* (1894)[9] or Levi (Leo T. Dowling, 1844–1911) *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* (1908)[10]. Only in vol. 6 (Spalding 2003, 75) he mentioned Jesus, in answer to a question about the "missing years of Jesus". Did Spalding say that Jesus had spent the last 9 years of his life in India. This makes him closer to the Ahmadiyya[11] teachings on Jesus than to the Notovitch and Levi traditions (see: Ghulam Ahmad and E.C. Prophet[12])[13].

The American mystic teacher known as Thane of Hawaii, the founder of the spiritual group called The Prosperos, lived circa 1900–1989, stated in one of his lectures in 1974[14] that he was a member of the group that went with Spalding to India in 1935, and that he was the ghost-writer of some of Spalding's later books (as this would be in reference to the period post 1935 this would mean volumes IV, V, and VI of Spalding's work).

Spalding has at least one commonality with Karl May as both writers visited the countries in which their books were set only after they found fame, almost as if to prove that they had really been there. Karl May visited the United States in 1908, four years before his death. Spalding made his only documented trip to India in 1935, eleven years after the publication of his first volume in 1924. Spalding's teachings focus so much on the Christ of New Thought Movement that the Tibetan aspect of his books takes a back seat, unlike the following two people.

---

[8] Quotations from Spalding's books are not included as they are readily available to anyone wishing to become acquainted with them.

[9] https://bibliotheque-russe-et-slave.com/Livres/Notovitch_–_La_Vie_inconnue_de_Jesus-Christ.pdf. Access: 05.10.2017.

[10] http://www.sonpikap.com/the-aquariun-gospel-of-jesus-the-christ.pdf. Access: 05.10.2017.

[11] Ghulam Ahmed Hadhrat Mirza of Qadian (1835–1908) wrote in 1908 in Urdu *Jesus in India. Jesus' Deliverance from the Cross and Journey to India* (English edition 2003. London). In this book the founder of the Ahmadiyya Movement claimed that Jesus had survived the crucifixion and spent the last years of his life in India.

[12] E.C. Prophet's *The Lost Years of Jesus* (1984. Livingstone, MT) is a one-volume edition of the four existing accounts of the alleged Tibetan book describing the life and studies of Jesus in India prior to his Palestine period. These accounts – by Nicolai Notovitch (1858–1916?), Swami Abhedananda (1886–1939), Nicholas Roerich (1874–1947), and Elizabeth Caspari (1899–2002) – are given in full and with a detailed introduction.

[13] The Polish translation of Spalding's book, published in two parts (vols. 1–5 and vol. 6, 2002) contains some passages not to be found in the English text available on the web in pdf. format, such as the opening paragraph of the second chapter of vol. 1 in which Spalding mentions Emil's help in Southern India prior to the expedition's trip to Tibet.

[14] It is available in audio on the web (www.theprosperos.com/open-meeting; access 10.11.2016).

EDWIN JOHN DINGLE

Edwin John Dingle 1881–1972[15]

Our second protagonist presents a very different case. Dingle was born in Cornwall in 1881 and at the age of nine he became an orphan. Not much is known about his early years until 1900, when he crops up in the Straits Settlements (present day Singapore) as a journalist. He became fascinated with the Chinese language and culture, learnt Chinese, and spent much time travelling in the country. One of his best known books is *Across China on Foot* (1911). His special interest was Chinese cartography and his *New Map of China* (1916) is sometimes described as the first bilingual map of its kind. In addition, his *The New Atlas and Commercial Gazetteer of China* (1917) has been the basic textbook of its kind for several decades.

In 1911, he claimed to have spent several months in a Tibetan monastery where he learnt yoga, breathing exercises, meditation and some other psychic arts. His book on this, *My Life in Tibet*, was published in 1939. In 1927, he began lecturing on what he called *the science of mentalphysics*, a combination of the psychic arts he claimed to have learnt in Tibet. In 1933, he set up the Institute of Mentalphysics in Joshua Tree, California, spending the later years of his life teaching mentalphysics. He often used the Chinese version of his name, Ding Le Mei and wrote many books on China, Far

---

[15] https://archive.org/services/img/acrosschinaonfoo13420gut. Access: 05.10.2017.

Eastern commerce, mentalphysics, health and a balanced diet (he was a strict vegetarian). He died in 1972 but The Institute of Mentalphysics continues to exist and can be found on the web.

A more detailed analysis of his book entitled *My Life in Tibet* raises a number of questions. The first concerns the year of publication, 1939, 28 years after the events described. Why did he wait so long to publish it? The first page of the text begins with the title and subtitle *Written After 30 Years*, but no explanation is given for this long delay. The one-volume edition of *Across China on Foot* and *My Life in Tibet* includes numerous photographs from China but none from Tibet; there is only a picture of a group of prayer mills set against the landscape that looks more Chinese than Tibetan, and another one of an unidentified "Well-to-do Tibetan Woman". The books are written by a famous cartographer of China, but however contain no maps.

In some places in the book Dingle mentioned that Burma was not far away, so from this nugget of information one might deduce that he visited some monasteries on the China-Tibet border in Yunnan or Sichuan. To an average Westerner today – and most probably also in 1939 – going to Tibet really meant going to Lhasa, but Tibet was a very large country with many towns and villages. Whoever crossed the Tibetan frontier could rightly say he was in Tibet.

On one occasion (Dingle 1939, 90) he refers to a group of children listening to their teacher who was speaking in a language unknown to him – Tibetan – and adds "and I knew no Tibetan at that time". This seems to indicate that he learnt it later, but not a word in Tibetan is quoted throughout the books save *om mani padme hum* (Dingle 1939, 123) and the Tibetan name of Tibet *Bodyul* (Dingle 1939, 55). Dingle wrote that he met his Master in Tibet and learnt a lot of wisdom from him. He did not say anything about the Master save that he was wise and eloquent. The question naturally arises what language they used. Dingle knew Chinese, so probably they spoke Chinese until Dingle learnt Tibetan (if he did). This guess is supported by the fact that when Dingle mentioned distances – in Tibet – he used the Chinese measure "li" (Dingle 1939, 125).The teachings given by the Master were couched in biblical English and contained items one cannot really imagine being taught in a Tibetan (usually meaning Buddhist) monastery. As Dingle's books do not seem to be as readily available as Spalding's, a number of quotations will be offered:

> "Order and beauty come from Him, My Son. Thy creation is established in Him. His soul; is thy Soul. Hearken unto Him. Ponder the path of thy feet ere thou goes forward" (Dingle 1939, 47).

When Dingle told the Master that he desired a strong body through which to act, the Master answered:

> "Thinkest, then, that thou cans't build one? Thou thyself has alone brought this evil of thy mind upoin thyself. Thinkest thou cans't build again a perfect body, for thy spirit to shine through in absolute perfection once again?" (Dingle 1939, 84–85).

Dingle was reading a Book of Wisdom given him by the Master and learned the "seven eternal chapters of Great Life Itself":

"FIRST: AND FOR EVER, THERE IS 'GOD', beginningless, endless – the True One, the Great One… Alone is God. All but God is changing day by day. God's Word said, 'we make man in Our Own Image.' SECOND: THERE IS LOVE, the first quality. God is Love, and Love is everything… THIRD: THERE IS LIGHT – God's moving life in thee… FOURTH: THERE IS HOLY TRUTH – the essentiality of Life. Truth is established in God's established LAW… FIFTH: THERE IS WISDOM – the silent director of the energy of The Law, abides ever and is found else wither never than in Truth… SIXTH: THERE IS ENERGY – that which is universal and unchangeable, that is Life's only motivating principle… SEVENTH: THERE IS MANIFESTATION – which is the culmination of the world of God, visible and invisible… THAT MAN IS GOD IN HUMAN FORM!" (Dingle 1939, 113–115).

Some pages later Dingle received the teachings on the Creator:

"The Creator is within me, looking out on the Universe THROUGH MY EYES; The Creator is within me, listening to the sounds of the Universe THROUGH MY EARS; The Creator is within me, thinking the thought of the Universe THROUGH MY MIND; The Creator is within me, issuing the sounds of the Universe THROUGH MY THROAT – purify Thou my throat; The Creator is within me, doing the work of the Universe THROUGH MY HANDS; The Creator is within me EXPRESSING THROUGH ME… Whatever the Creator is, I am… I am perfect as He, as It, that which I feel within me, is perfect… I am perfect Mind in a Perfect Body… I AM THAT I AM THAT I FEEL THAT I AM".

The conclusion of this teaching goes: "That, My Son, is for thee alone. Do it daily in remembrance of me" (Dingle 1939, 124–125).

These teachings bring to mind the *THAT ART THOU* passages from the *Chhandogya Upanishad* and the spirit of the *Bhagavad Gita*, while the Christian conclusion is too obvious. They also may remind readers of the New Thought Movement (as in the case of Spalding) and of Guy Ballard's *I AM* Movement[16] that flourished in the US at that time.

Dingle (1939, 53) explained why he did not reveal any details concerning his journey, but his explanation is unconvincing. Would he not have found it too difficult to succumb to the temptation of including a map of Tibet, even a sketch one, knowing how limited such maps were available in 1939?

I shall not quote the Master's teachings on the glory of the human body (Dingle 1939, 131) and on the *Seven Kingdoms of the Universe* (147–148) as these are long and would be needed to be quoted in their entirety for their full impact to be felt. The next question which arises is whether such teachings could come from a Tibetan monastery. Dingle never said that his Master was a Tibetan monk; the Master quotes from Laotse and Confucius, and gives the *Seven Kingdoms* teaching in Chinese, so this points to him being probably Chinese. Dingle once quoted from the text he identified as *Light On*

---

[16] See: https://www.britannica.com/topic/I-AM-movement. Access: 05.10.2017.

The Path (81–82), but this is not Atisha's *Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment*[17], at least not the Tibetan text of it; it may well be Dingle's own translation from the Chinese. Much space is given by Dingle to the art of breathing, which we know to be one of the key points of his Mentalphysics.

From all this, what can be said is that Dingle is no Spalding – he knows China, he knows Chinese, he can document his walk across China with photographs (though not with maps), so he *seems* undoubtedly more trustworthy than Spalding. Maybe he really did stay in a monastery on the China-Tibet border, but the teachings he claims to have received seem a mix of Vedic wisdom, Taoism, and New Thought Christianity. These teachings clearly focus on one God, so they cannot be Buddhist. Dingle referred to Balzac (53), Jacob Boehme (101), Paracelsus (108) and Montaigne (179), but he never mentioned Swedenborg[18], who was a Jacob Boehme's great continuator.

In sheer contrast with the one-volume-bound *Across China on Foot*, *My Life in Tibet* does not provide the reader with any clear evidence in favor of its authenticity. The Institute of Mentalphysics still exists and his books are being reprinted, which indicates Dingle has not been forgotten at least in the US. However, I have never met a follower of Mentalphysics, so the true popularity of Dingle today is a moot question.

THEODORE ILLION

The last of our three protagonists is the one we know least about, even though he is closest to us in time. He was born in 1898 in Canada (uncertain) and died in Austria in 1984. He wrote in German and English and comes into our equation because of two books he authored: *Rätselhaftes Tibet* (1936), translated into English in 1937 as *In Secret Tibet*; and *Darkness over Tibet* written in English and published 1938.

Illion used two pen names, Theodor Burang and Theodor Nolling. His book on Tibetan medicine, written as Theodor Burang, is available in English translation as *Tibetan Art of Healing*, 1975. He authored several papers on Tibetan medicine under the name of Theodor Burang.

In Secret Tibet does not seem to have made a sensation at the time of its first edition. It is a forgotten book now, at least in the English-speaking world. Martin Brauen in *Traumwelt Tibet, Westliche Trugebilder* (Brauen 2000, 75) wrote a detailed account of the myth of Tibet and what the West projected onto it. He mentioned Illion in passing but failed to mention Spalding and Dingle.

As in all the three cases, Illion did not include a map of his travels, nor did he mention any place names other than Lhasa. However, he seems to have put a deal of

---

[17] See: http://www.drepunggomangusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/English-Root-Text-Bodhipatha-pradIpa.pdf. Access: 05.10.2017.
[18] On Swedenborg's teachings see: https://swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/explore/. Access: 05.10.2017.

Theodore Illion 1898 (?)–1984[19]

thought into providing his readers with some proof of the authenticity of the book – *In Secret Tibet* is generously sprinkled with Tibetan words and expressions, most of them correct or at least recognizable. The reviews of the book available on the web stress its numerous similarities to Alexandra David Nèel's *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*. Illion's accounts of how he used iodine to darken his skin and nose-plugs to flatten his nose are interesting if not fully convincing but they could have occurred. However, he claimed to have spent two years in Tibet, from 1934 to 1936, but would he have survived that long without being discovered, even if, as he said, he tried to speak as little as possible so as not to reveal his foreign accent?

His liberal sprinkling of the book with Tibetan words is no guarantee of the credibility of the author and may only be an indication that he did his Tibetan homework more thoroughly than Spalding or Dingle. If he managed to conceal his foreign identity so well then why was he not in a position to be able to present some proof of the adventures he so vividly described? There is a strange mix of the seemingly authentic and the concocted in the book. He is correct on many points, but then again he could have gleaned them from Alexandra David Nèel. Even 20 years later the Lobsang Rampa's *Third Eye* seemed still convincing to its British editors.

[19] https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-yPqOjCownF8/VtNRbceJkaI/AAAAAAAAIak/BV5FzgBIc7w/s1600/
Illion%252C%2BTheodore%2Bbl.jpg. Access: 05.10.2017.

Unlike Spalding and Dingle, Illion did not present Christian teachings in Oriental disguise. He carefully distinguished between the truly wise Tibetan hermits and their pretenders. He realized that the Buddhism of Tibet had little in common with the teachings of the Buddha: "Dogmatic Buddhism is an organized distortion of the spirit of the living Buddha" (Illion 1937, 189). Similar to Dingle, Illion quoted his Tibetan friend saying that:

> "the guiding principle should be Love… Life would have no meaning if there was anything certain. The more you are pushed by life, the better. Never be satisfied, especially with yourself" (Illion 1937, 184, Illion's italics).

These are definitely wise words close to the essence of Buddhism.

The way the book is written seems to preclude any possibility of Illion's taking photographs or making any drawings while in Tibet, nor of bringing any artifacts back with him. This indeed could have been the case but it could also have been a carefully planned hoax. From a 'factographic' point of view – if indeed this term can be used in this context – Illion's book easily outpaces Spalding's and Dingle's. If the three books discussed here were judged here on the principle of *beneficio dubitandi*, it is Illion's who would win hands down.

CONCLUSION

What can be said about our three protagonists is that none of them made such an impact in Tibetan study circles the way Lobsang Rampa did. Illion seems to have been completely forgotten, Dingle maybe less so and only Spalding remains truly popular. As regards their 'setting up the Oriental stage', it is obvious that Spalding knew nothing of India and Tibet as he was wrong on almost every detail mentioned. So, it seems clear that the main message of his work for readers lies elsewhere, in other aspects than those connected with Tibet. Nevertheless, their influence on building the stereotypical image of Tibet and the popular Tibetan myth in the Western world, was enormous.

Dingle mentions no Tibetan details at all; no names, no place names, no Tibetan words save *om mani padme hum*, not even Tibetan salted tea. This is quite surprising as the earlier book with which *My Life in Tibet* is bound up – *Across China on Foot* – shows he could be the master of describing small details. The possibility does exist he wanted the later book to have the appearance as if a timeless piece of spiritual teaching.

Theodore Illion's book, *In Secret Tibet*, seems the most authentic of the three. The book is clearly not intended to start any organized group of believers as first and foremost it is a travel book with its main spiritual message contained in its last four pages.

It is more difficult to draw some conclusions about Dingle. He really knew the country of his main interest – China. Dingle's – or rather his Master's – teachings on the human body seem close to Taoism and the teaching on the Seven Kingdoms of

the Universe is an interesting attempt at relating the Buddhist Eightfold Path to the Christian God (in this teaching the Eighth Path is *THE ABSOLUTE GOD* (Dingle 1939, 148, Dingle's capitals). This seems like the New Thought Movement yet again. Dingle's Institute of Mentalphysics had already been functioning for several years by the time *My Life in Tibet* was published and perhaps Dingle wanted to give the Institute a scripture of sorts to aid it by providing it with a source of authority.

Spalding remains the only one of the three whose books are still readily available. It is obvious that his 1894 expedition was a hoax. When he went to India with a group of friends and followers in 1935 he promised they would meet one of the Masters on arrival, but they never did (Bruton 1934, 66). The photographs from India included in vol. VI of his work do not prove anything and most of them could simply be postcards.

Perhaps Spalding and Dingle simply wanted to share with others their own interpretations of Christianity, and decided to do so by dressing them up in an Oriental disguise. If this is the case then they would have been following in the footsteps of other writers such as Plato and the story of Atlantis, Thomas Moore's *Utopia*, Tommaso Campanella's *City of the Sun*, Jonathan Swift's *Travel to the Country of the Houyhnhnms* (the much-neglected fourth part of *Gulliver's Travels*) to name just some. It is the *message* that is key and not the alleged country of its origin or the man who is telling it. Both Dingle's and Spalding's books would have caused a splash without their Oriental embellishments. Dingle's book could be seen as an interesting extension of yoga philosophy. Spalding's volumes IV, V and the first part of vol. VI are much more interesting and thought-provoking than the first three and it is in the brief papers and answers to questions that Spalding the true thinker can best be seen.

Dingle wrote his book some years after he set up his Institute of Mentalphysics. The question arises whether Spalding wanted to start a religious movement. It seems highly unlikely as his spiritual roots – the New Thought Movement – was already well-established by 1924. Moreover, he seems to have been completely taken aback by the incredible success of his first volume and was completely unprepared for it. He was faced with the choice to confess that he had made it all up or simply to go on. He chose the latter but never tried to make money on it or capitalize on his own popularity. The man whose books sold hundreds of thousands of copies died alone and penniless.

I think that David Bruton[20] gives a fair picture of Spalding the man:

"It seems they [=his books, PK] had to be put across by a man whom science would ignore and religion would not challenge. He never defended anything he said and I never knew him to attempt proof of his statements. People accepted him wholeheartedly because he told them what they wanted to hear. In other words, something about his books confirmed an inner conviction each one feels about his ability to attain spiritual understanding. His writings gave the people a release from the hell

[20] David Bruton's *Baird T. Spalding As I Knew Him* is the only biography of Spalding, written by one who knew him well. David Bruton should not be confused with Paul Brunton the author of *A Search in Secret India* (London 1934).

and damnation of Christianity and, above all, rescued them from being classified as sinners living in a veil of tears... I do not consider that Baird T. Spalding was a great man; rather, he was fabulous and fantastic and he did fulfill a great destiny in a fantastic way. His books, whether garbled or not have ushered in the New Age of Light" (Bruton 1934, 128–129).[21]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A t i s h a D i p a m k a r a s h r i j n a n a (982–1054). *The Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment.* http://www.drepunggomangusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/English-Root-Text-BodhipathapradIpa.pdf. Access: 05.10.2017.

B e r n b a u m E. 1980. *The Way to Shambhala: A Search for the Mythical Kingdom Beyond the Himalayas.* New York.

B i s h o p P. 1989. *The Myth of Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape.* London.

B l a v a t s k y H. P. 1971. *The Secret Doctrine, the Synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy.* 6 volumes. Adyar.

B l a v a t s k y H. P. (edited by Boris de Zirkoff). 1994 (new edition). *Isis Unveiled, a Master Key to the Mysteries of Ancient and Modern science and Theology* (vol. I *Science,* vol. II *Theology. Quest Books*). Illinois and Chennai (Madras).

B r a u e n M. 2000. *Traumwelt Tibet, Westliche Trugebilder.* Bern-Stuttgart-Vienna.

B r a y J. 2009. *The Oeconomy of Human Life*: an "Indian Bramin" in 18th Century Tibet. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 3 (19, No. 4), 439–458.

B r u t o n D. 1934. *Baird T. Spalding As I Knew Him.* Kessinger Reprint, n.p.

B u r a n g T. (= T. Illion). 1975. *Tibetan Art of Healing.* London.

C a t h i e B. n. d. *Acoustic Levitation of Stones.* https://www.bibliotecapleyades.net/ciencia/antigravity-worldgrid/ciencia_antigravityworldgrid08.htm. Access: 10.11.2016.

D a v i d - N è e l A. 1971. *Magic and Mystery in Tibet.* London.

D a v i d - N è e l A. 2013. *Podróż do Lhasy.* Warsaw. [*Voyage d'une Parisienne à Lhasa.* 1927. Paris].

D a v i d - N è e l A. and L a m a Y o n g d e n. n. d. *Lama Pięciu Mądrości.* Warsaw. [*Le lama au cing sagasses.* 1935. Paris].

D i n g l e E. J. 1911. *Across China on Foot.* New York. https://www.gutenberg.org/files/13420/13420-h/13420-h.htm. Access: 05.10.2017.

D i n g l e E. J. 1916. *New Map of China.* Far Eastern Geographical Establishment.

D i n g l e E. J. (ed.) 1917. *The New Atlas And Commercial Gazetteer Of China.* Shanghai.

D i n g l e E. J. 1939. *My Life in Tibet.* Los Angeles.

D o d i n T. and R ä t h e r H. (eds.) 2001. *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections and Fantasies.* Boston.

F o s t e r B. and F o s t e r M. 2005. *Niezwykłe życie Aleksandry David-Nèel.* Warsaw. [*The secret lives of Alexandra David-Nèel.* 1998. Woodstock and New York].

---

[21] There is another strange story connected with Tibet. The author was the Swedish aero engineer Henry Kjellson (1891–1962). In his book in Swedish entitled *Forntiders teknik* (Stockholm 1952) translated into English as *The Lost Techniques* in 1961 (both unavailable to me at the moment of writing) he describes a strange event seen in Tibet in 1939 or 1940 by his friend Dr. Jarl (a medical doctor), when Tibetan monks used the power of sound waves to move stones. Bruce Cathie's account of it in English is available on the web (see bibliography). This story is also described by Guy Lyon Playfair and Scott Hill, 1978 (212–214 in the Polish edition of their book, see bibliography). Henry Kjellson's stub biography is available in Swedish Wikipedia but Doctor Jarl remains unidentified.

Ghulam Ahmed Hadhrat Mirza of Qadian. 2003. *Jesus in India. Jesus' Deliverance from the Cross and Journey to India*. London. [First published in Urdu: 1908. Qadian].

Illion T. 1937. *In Secret Tibet*. London. http://pahar.in/wpfb-file/1937-in-secret-tibet-in-disguise-amongst-lamas-robbers-and-wise-men-by-illion-s-pdf/. Access: 05.10.2017.

Illion T. 1938. *Darkness over Tibet*. London. https://www.ivantic.info/Ostale_knjiige/Darkness-Over-Tibet-T-Illion.pdf. Access: 05.10.2017.

Levi. 1908. *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. Los Angeles. http://www.sonpikap.com/the-aquariun-gospel-of-jesus-the-christ.pdf. Access: 05.10.2017.

Lobsang Rampa T. [C. H. Hoskin]. 1956. *The Third Eye*. https://www.lobsangrampa.org/ebooks/en/The-Third-Eye.pdf. Access: 15.09.2016.

Lopez D. 1999. *Prisoners of Shangri-La. Tibetan Buddhism and the West.* Chicago.

Neuhaus T. 2012. *Tibet in the Western Imagination.* Basingstoke–New York.

Notovitch N. 1894. *La vie inconnuè de Jesus Christ*. Paris. https://bibliotheque-russe-et-slave.com/Livres/Notovitch_-_La_Vie_inconnue_de_Jesus-Christ.pdf. Access: 05.10.2017.

Playfair G. L. and Hill S. 1984. *Cykle nieba, czynniki kosmiczne i ich wpływ na nasze życie.* Warsaw. [*The Cycles of Heaven. Cosmic Forces And What They Are Doing To You.* New York 1978].

Prophet E. C. 1984. *The Lost Years of Jesus.* Livingstone, MT.

Spalding B. T. 2002. *Życie i Nauka Mistrzów Dalekiego Wschodu* (6 volumes). Gdańsk. [*Life and Teaching of the Masters of the Far East.* vol. 1. 1924, vol. 2. 1926, vol. 3. 1935, vol. 4. 1950, vol. 5. 1955?, vol. 6. 1996. http://www.horuscentre.org/images/Life_and_Teaching-Vol_1.pdf. Access: 10.11.2016].

Thane of Hawaii. 1974. *Adventures in the Psychic/ External Perception World*. www.theprosperos.com/open-meeting. Access: 10.11.2016.

websites:

www.bairdtspalding.org. Access 10.11.2016: on Bairdt Spalding.

https://www.librarything.com/author/spaldingbairdt. Access: 05.10.2017: B. Spalding. Promo Picture circa 1920?

www.mentalphysics.org. Access 10.11.2016: on Edwin John Dingle and the Institute of Mentalphysics.

https://mentalphysics.wordpress.com. Access 10.11.2016: on Mentalphysics.

https://www.britannica.com/event/New-Thought. Access: 05.10.2017: on the American New Thought Movement.

https://www.christianscience.com/. Access: 05.10.2017: on Christian Science Church.

https://pictures.abebooks.com/PBRECY/22410916306.jpg. Access: 05.10.2017: picture of the first edition of Dingle's *My Life in Tibet*.

https://www.britannica.com/topic/I-AM-movement. Access: 05.10.2017: on I AM Movement.

https://archive.org/services/img/acrosschinaonf0013420gut. Access: 05.10.2017: photo of E. J. Dingle.

https://4.bp.blogspot.com/-yPqOjCownF8/VtNRbceJkaI/AAAAAAAAIak/BV5FzgBIc7w/s1600/Illion%252C%2BTheodore%2Bbl.jpg. Access: 05.10.2017: photo of T. Illion.

https://swedenborg.com/emanuel-swedenborg/explore/. Access: 05.10.2017: on Swedenborg.

Author's address:

Piotr Klafkowski, Ph.D.
Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology Unit
Institute of Sociology, University of Szczecin
ul. Krakowska 71-79
71-017 Szczecin, POLAND
e-mail: pklafkowski@gmail.com

CONTEMPORARY BÖNPO COMMUNITY
IN TIBETAN REFUGEE CAMPS

ANNA SZYMOSZYN

INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, POZNAŃ

This article[1] describes a religious minority group called the Bönpo who live in Tibet (China), Nepal and India. Bönpos live in villages, in scattered communities and in two Tibetan refugee Bönpo camps in Himachal Pradesh (India) and in Kathmandu Valley (Nepal). This article presents the social policy of religious leaders from both camps, who have been mixing different ethnic groups and nations in one camp in order to help this niche culture survive. One of the effects of such policies carried out over the last 50 years is the deep influence of Tibetanness on Himalayan people, mostly from Mustang and Dolpo, who have grown up in Bönpo refugee camps. In the article, I analyse population data in detail to show how small the Bönpo community is and why their leaders have pursued such a social policy focused on religious and Tibetan identification despite ethnic and national differences.

*   *   *

Artykuł opisuje mniejszość religijną bönpów istniejącą wśród Tybetańczyków i ludności himalajskiej. Bönpowie żyją na terenach tybetańskich zajętych przez Chiny, w Nepalu i Indiach. Mieszkają w zwartych społecznościach wiejskich, w rozproszeniu oraz w dwóch tybetańskich obozach dla uchodźców z rodzin bön w Himáćal Pradeś (Indie) oraz w Dolinie Kathmnadu (Nepal). Artykuł przedstawia politykę społeczną liderów religijnych obu obozów, którzy mieszają różne etnicznie i narodowo grupy w jednym obozie, po to, by przetrwała ta niszowa kultura. Jednym ze skutków takiej polityki prowadzonej w ciągu ostatnich 50 lat jest głęboki wpływ tybetańskości na ludność himalajską, szczególnie z Mustangu i Dolpo, która wychowała się w obozach uchodźców dla bönpów. W artykule szczegółowo analizuję dane populacyjne, aby pokazać, jak małą społecznością są bönpowie i dlaczego ich liderzy prowadzą politykę społeczną skoncentrowaną na religijno-tybetańskiej identyfikacji, mimo różnic etniczno-narodowych.

K e y w o r d s: Himalayan people, Tibetans, Dolpo, Mustang, Bön, population, religious minority, migration, boarding school.

HISTORY AND CHARACTERISTICS OF BÖN[2]

There is rich scientific literature on the history and philosophy of Bön[2]. Research on this religion and culture began at the beginning of the 20th century, but developed in earnest after the discovery of the Dunhuang manuscripts in China. Up to 1997,

---

[1] This article has been partially compiled from some of my previous publications: Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2004, 117–134; Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2006, 264–283; Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2011, 177–202.

An internet map with the location of the Himalayan regions of Dolpo and Mustang and the Indian village of Dolanji in Himachal Pradesh (prepared by A. Szymoszyn)

Dan Martin had counted 260 publications (articles and books) on Bön in English, German, French and Tibetan.[4]

   This religion, according to its followers, originated from deep pre-Buddhist times (from the so-called holy time), when great heroes were active. It was to be one of the basic elements that was remnant from the ancient kingdoms of Tazig (*sTag gzig*, *rTag gzigs*)[5] (Karmay 1998, 104; Rossi 1999, 18; Tenzin Wangyal 2002, xix) and Shang Shung

---

[2] In this article I use the transcription of the Tibetan word *Bön*, because it better reflects its phonetics, however, in Western publications, the transliteration *bon* is equally often used. Transliteration of the Tibetan language according to Wylie (1959) has been adopted in Tibetan literature, although transcription notation is equally common. Due to the large geographical and dialectical diversity of the Tibetan language, its historical development and different scientific traditions, there are several transcriptional recordings of Tibetan (see: Bareja-Starzyńska and Mejor 2002, 56–57; also *The Transliteration and Transcription of Tibetan*).

[3] Bön – the name of the original Tibetan religion and culture. Bönpo – (*bon po*) a Tibetan term specifying a follower of the Bön religion, belonging to Bön culture.

[4] On the Bön religion see: *Bon Bibliography* 2011; Martin 1997; Martin 1999; Bansal 1999; Baumer 2002; Namkhai Norbu 1995; Nyima Dakpa 2005; Reynolds 2005; Rossi 1999; Sangye Tenzin. n.d.p.; Snellgrove 1980; Tenzin Wangyal 1993; Tenzin Wangyal 2002.

[5]   Another recording of the name of the land appearing in the literature: *Ta zig* (Namkhai Norbu 1995, 4, 224), *Tagzig* (Nyima Dakpa 2005, 5), *Tazik* (Kvaerne 1995, 14), *Ta-zig* (Martin 1999, 260).

(*Zhang zhung*) (Kvaerne 1985, 4). Researchers are of the opinion that Tazig land could have existed in or adjacent to Persia (Karmay 1998, 104, Martin 1999, 278) or indeed west of Western Tibet, on the border between Gilgit and Bactria (northern Pakistan and north-east Afghanistan) (Martin 1999, 266). Some see the similarity of the name with Tajikistan. The kingdom of Shang Shung was located at the current borderland of India-Tibetan-Nepal (eastern regions of Kinnaur, Spiti, Zanskar, Ladakh and Dolpo) and Western Tibet (Ngari Province in the Tibet Autonomous Region, PRC). Bön culture spread from there to all of Tibet, and followers of this religion chose the first Tibetan king from the historic Yarlung Valley. The land of Shang Shung was ruled over by the ancient and medieval royal dynasty Ligmincha (*lig myi rhya*), with Bön as the state religion. The last king of Shang Shung was ruling the country in dramatic times (the 7th century), when Tibet conquered his kingdom (Karmay 1998, 114).

Both religions of Tibet – Bön and Buddhism, fought bloodily between the 8th– 11th centuries. Traditional believers (Bönpos), as members of a less consolidated state-political system lost control and influence among Tibetans. For centuries, Bönpos were discriminated against because of their religion by Buddhists, although their beliefs and rituals imperceptibly penetrated into Buddhism itself.

An unambiguous definition of what is and what is not the Bön religion has given scientists many headaches in connection with the historical development of not only this religion but also Tibetan Buddhism and the communities that both traditions cultivated. Per Kvaerne (1995, 9–10) divided Bön into a pre-Buddhist religion (Yungdrung Bön – *g.yung drung bon*) already present in the area of Tibet around 2000 BC, and later Bön which he defined as a Tibetan, folk system with non-Buddhist beliefs and practices. In addition, he noted that scientists have found that the so-called new Bön religion (*bon gsar-ma*) came into being in the 10th–11th centuries after coming into contact with Buddhism. According to other sources, new Bön emerged only in the 14th century (Karmay 1998, 121, Reynolds 2005, 10).

Over the centuries, Bön and Buddhism have interacted with each other, absorbing elements from each other and thus becoming similar. Thus, Tibetan Buddhism (mainly based on the Vajrayana) is very different from its Indian 'cousin' and the philosophy of contemporary Bön resembles more that taught by Shakyamuni and his disciples. To this day, disputes persist as to whether Bön belongs to a broadly understood Buddhism or if instead it is a completely separate religion.

If the doctrine and practice of both religions is compared, it is very difficult to identify significant differences between them. For believers, both terms equate to doctrines regarding such ideas as law, truth and reality. Philosophical concepts such as *samsara*, *nirvana*, *karman*, awakening and suffering are the basis for both[6]. These religions are, however, mutually contradictory, which is evident in the dissimilarity of

---

[6] The form the article takes does not allow for explanations of all the concepts mentioned.

some rituals, iconography, and names which are emphasized today in the statements of their devotees. Above all, however, differences rely on the interpretation of the origins of the world and sacred time and in addition, both religions have different sources of origin. Buddhists derive their doctrinal foundation from Buddha Gautama Shakyamuni of Terai (Nepal) while the Bönpo derive theirs from Tönpa Shenrab of Tazig. Some scholars believe that differences (such as turning prayer mills and circling holy places and temples in the opposite direction, different mantras, images of deities and the names of Buddhist equivalents, the Shang-shung alphabet and the language used for some rituals) are external manifestations of the same system of beliefs and norms, because at their core both Buddhism and Bön are the same performing rituals to achieve enlightenment and awakening. In both religions there is also a belief in the existence of Buddhahood as an enlightened being and Bodhisattva as an awakened one who for the good of humanity, returns to earth to develop *dharma*[7] and help others in reaching enlightenment. Therefore, Bön is considered by some of the interested as a part to broadly understood Tibetan Buddhism. Others, however, emphasize the fact that a different concept of sacred history and sources of religious authority are essential elements and therefore classify Bön as a separate denomination. This is not the place to delve into the nuances involved, although it is worth noting that these philosophical discussions are reflected in the life of Bön community members in India, Nepal and the West (see: Urbańska-Szymoszyn 2011).

Bönpo Tibetans remain aware of the fact that they are "the vessels" of the "true religion of Tibet". For believers, their religion is *Yungdrung Bön*, equating to "eternal Bön" or "always faith". The name was coined after the 10th century (Rossi 1999, 17–18). They believe that the first person to be awakened was a cosmic Prince named Tönpa Shenrab Miwoche (*sTon pa gShen rab mi bo*). This refers more to a title than a name, and means "a great teacher" and "a supreme, extraordinary priest" (Baumer 2002, 85–86; Guard 1995). He lived long before Shakyamuni in the land of Tazig (*sTag-gzig*). Tönpa Shenrab was supposed to have spread *Dharma* in Shang Shung and Tibet and be the creator of teachings that were largely codified in the Middle Ages. The teachings were hidden in times of persecution and then considered as *termas* (*gter ma*) – religious treasures hidden for ordinary people, and discovered and interpreted by *tertöns* (*gter ston*) – special defenders and *dharma* teachers. In the 11th century, the cult of Tönpa Shenrab and mythology related to him developed.

Bön followers define their religious identity differently. It is less radical among the Himalayan population, stronger among Tibetans, but the strongest of all among western followers. In general, I was confronted with the opinion that believers were advocates of treating them as a separate denomination (different than Buddhist schools).

---

[7] *Dharma* (*Skt*; in Tib.: *bon*, *chos*) – The term has multiple meanings. In relation to Bön, it means both spiritual teachings that originate from Buddhas and one's own spiritual path. It can also mean "existence" or "being" (Tenzin Wangyal 2002, 140).

But when they had to identify themselves in wider social perspective (for example on the background of a nation or Christianity), there were two different understandings of belonging: some of them recognized themselves as members of a larger community as broadly understood Tibetan Buddhist one, others as a more or less separate religious community. Borders are not explicit and as clearly defined as they are for example, in Christianity, where all agree that Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Lutheranism are separate denominations which can be grouped under the umbrella term of Christianity.

In the Tibetan tradition, a lot of Bönpo relationships with Nyingmapa (*rNying ma pa*)[8] are met – in the lines of socio-religious communication, Dzogchen philosophy (*rDzogs chen*), the tradition of successive incarnations, discovering the *termas*[9], the use of oracles, even in connecting families through marriages. Such connections (though less frequent) exist also in other schools of Tibetan Buddhism. In the everyday lives of Himalayan and Tibetan inhabitants, this manifests itself in mixing of different holy figures, celebrating holidays from other denominations, and in sending siblings to monasteries belonging to different religious schools: to Bön and Nyingma, or as is usually the case in Mustang – to Bön and Sakya (*sa-skya pa*)[10]. Many times in the houses of the Bönpo in Mustang (Nepal) as well as in the Tibetan refugee camp in Dolanji, pictures of Bön and Tibetan Buddhism deities side by side can be seen. Cases have been known of finding *tülku* (*sprul sku*)[11] for Nyingmapa in Bönpo families and vice versa.

This does not mean, however, that in Buddhist families such an amalgamation of traditions is commonplace. The attitude of Buddhists from other schools to the Bönpo is generally negative. They are treated as an unorthodox sect that plagiarizes Buddhist rituals (Rossi 1999, 19, Kvaerne 1995, 13). Such a picture of Bönpo people was transferred to the West by Tibet's first explorers, who received their information of Bön from Buddhists. To this day, some Buddhists treat their Bönpo neighbours as some sort of believers in primitive non-Buddhist cults. Scientists, however, have proved that many rituals and customs taught in Tibetan Buddhism stem from Bön, including the hanging of prayer flags, the offering of five-colour *lungta* little pieces of papers during the *sang* – smoke offerings, making *torms*, the burning of incense, the use of oracles, the *cham* dance and some Dzogchen teachings (see Namkhai Norbu 1995; Kvaerne 1990, 143–153; Kvaerne 1995; Karmay 1998; Rossi 1999; Baumer 2002).

In the fifteenth century the Bönpo began to organize their monastic life modelled on that of Buddhist monasteries. In 1405, Sherab Gyaltsen (*gShen rab rgyal mshshan*)

---

[8] Nyingma – one of the main Tibetan Buddhist schools, called the old order.

[9] *Termas* (*gter ma*) – religious manuscripts with the teachings hidden in times of persecution and considered as religious treasures in order to be discovered and interpreted by *tertöns* (*gter ston*) – special defenders and *dharma* teachers.

[10] Sakya – one of the main Tibetan Buddhist schools. Sakya and Bön run intense missionary activities in the Mustang area and are therefore the most popular.

[11] *Tülku* – bodily manifestation of an enlightened being, or a conscious reincarnation, although *tülku* generally does not remember his previous incarnation.

founded the Menri Monastery (*sMan ri*) in Thob-Rgyal, in the Tsang Province of Central Tibet (Kvaerne 1977, 83–98). It was there that the rule regarding freedom of choice was initiated in deciding who became abbot which has continued until today. He is elected by a draw of lots from among all monks possessing a *geshe* degree (*dge bshes*)[12] and not as a result of being the reincarnation of his predecessor, as in the case of Gelukpa (*Dge-lugs pa*), or by inheritance as practiced in Sakyapa. Lots are drawn during a religious celebration and the winning candidate becomes spiritual leader of the entire Bön line.

In 1834, the Yungdrung ling (*g.yung drung gling*) monastery was established in Tsangu. In the 19th century an abbot of this monastery assumed leadership over the whole Bön, a position which he held until the mid-twentieth century, sometimes rivaling the Menri. The aftermath of this rivalry has still survived in a hidden form and manifests itself in the delicate relations between lamas of both monasteries, but also in the approach of European Bön believers to individual teachers.

THE BÖNPO COMMUNITY IN EXILE

Up until September 2017, the head of Bön lineage was the Menri abbot, the 33rd Trizin – geshe Sangye Tenzin Yongdong (*sangs rgyas bsTan 'dzin ljong ldong*), who was named Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche (*lung rtogs bstan pa'i nyi ma rin po che'i*)[13]. The Menri main monastery was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution in Tibet under Chinese occupation. In connection with this, 33rd Trizin decided to rebuild the monastery in the Tibetan refugee camp in Dolanji, India. Construction began in 1967 and it was also in this year that the first group of monks came. The Yungdrung ling monastery was also destroyed during the Chinese invasion and transferred operations to the Triten Norbutse monastery (*khri brtan nor bu rtse*), built in 1987, in the western

---

[12] *Gesze* – a degree awarded to monks who have completed Buddhist theological and philosophical studies at a dialectical school and have successfully passed the exam. In an international context, this degree is translated as a doctor of philosophy (a Buddhist one). However, the mode of education and the way the exam is passed is far from European procedures. It is closely related to religious practices and rituals. The final exam lasts for several days, takes place in a temple and at its core is a religious ritual. Answering the questions asked by the examiners is a highly ritualised process and is done in the presence of other monks, one's family and other invited guests. It resembles more a religious ceremony than an academic exam. Even if the candidate fails to answer most of the questions, he acquires the geshe title because the completion of many years of study, the passage of religious initiation cermonies and the acceptance of one's superiors are more important than the exam itself. The consequences of an inferior performance can be a loss of face.

[13] He died on Sept. 14, 2017. His life history see: http://www.ligmincha.org/index.php/en/boen-buddhism/lineage-of-teachers/hh-lungtok-tenpai-nyima.html, access Sept. 2017. New, 34th Trizin, Geshe Dawa Dhargyal was drawn on Dec. 2017, see: http://www.ligmincha.org/en/international-news/421-34th-menri-trizin.html, access Jan. 2018.

part of Kathmandu Valley in Nepal. The main teacher of the Bön lineage, known as Lobpön (*slob dpon*)[14], resides there. The present main teacher and founder of the monastery is Yongdzin Lobpön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche (*slob dpon sangs rgyas bsTan 'dzin rin po che'i*)[15]. There is a strictly defined hierarchy and delineation of functions between the abbots of the two centers, although the *Rinpoches* from individual monasteries generally have large autonomy in their lifestyle and how they transfer their teachings and thus attract differing types of personalities as students.

Both monasteries when they functioned in Tibet flourished, and up to 1959 they housed a total of several hundred monks. There were also Bönpo monasteries in eastern Tibet in the provinces of Kham and Amdo, and in the Himalayas, especially in Dolpo. In exile, religious centers in Dolanji and Kathmandu are blooming, educating many monks, largely thanks to donations from Western believers and non-governmental cultural and religious organizations.

Until the late 1960s, most of the Tibetans living in exile worked in the Himalayas on the construction of roads. Because of the extremely hard work involved, many of them died, including the 32th Menri abbot – Sherab Lodro at the age of 28, in 1963. In order to integrate this religious minority in exile and protect it from being absorbed and disappeared in the vast mass of Buddhists, the main then Bön teacher, Lobpön Sangye Tenzin Rinpoche, who had emigrated from Tibet in 1959, decided to settle in one place all Bönpos. He received from the 14th Dalai Lama, the head of the Tibetan Government In Exile, and from the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru permission to settle in the State of Himachal Pradesh in India in the Solan district village of Dolanji.

In 1965, the Indian authorities granted permission for the Tibetan Bon Foundation[16] to register, and in 1966/1967 Lobpön Sangye Tenzin received from the local authorities land in and around the village, which he bought from local landowners thanks to the Vatican Catholic Foundation. This place was named Thopgyal – after a village in Tibet, where the original monastery was located but soon began to be called colloquially "Dolanji Settlement". Bön Tibetans began arriving from different parts of India, Nepal and Tibet to settle there. The first group of settlers was a group of 68 road workers' families from Manali. Each family received a house and a piece of land and in 1968, the new 33rd Trizin began building a temple and monastery and ordered all Bön monks living in exile to come to the monastery in Dolanji in order to carry out their monastic life[17]. Thus, in the 1960s, the only Tibetan exile camp created

---

[14] Triten Norbutse monastery history see: http://www.triten.org/TR/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53, access Sept. 2017.

[15] His life history see: http://www.ligmincha.org/index.php/en/boen-buddhism/lineage-of-teachers/yongdzin-rinpoche.html, access Sept. 2017.

[16] www.bonfoundation.org, access Sept. 2017.

[17] A history of the camp was written by me in 2004 on the basis of interviews with the main teachers of the Menri monastery in India –33 Trizin, Nyima Dakpa Rinpoche and Ponlop Thinley Nyima (materials

exclusively for Bön followers in India was established. The aim of this project was to take care of them, integrate them and help a unique culture survive, one that would undoubtedly disappear among other Tibetan mostly Buddisht refugees.

For many centuries, Tibetan Buddhists treated the Bönpo worse but this state of affairs began to change in exile. In 1977, for the first time, a representative of the Bön religion was included in the parliament of the Tibetan Government In Exile, and the Dalai Lama officially recognized Bön as the fifth school of Tibetan spirituality. In addition, the then religious leader of the Bön confessors received the title Trizin ("the lessee of the throne") from the Dalai Lama, which put him on equal footing in religious relations with the Tibetan hierarchs of the main schools of Tibetan Buddhism and with their highest representatives (Baumer 2002, 17). Confirmation of the rehabilitation of the Bön religion was conferred on it by the Dalai Lama as the head of the Gelugpa School and political leader when in 1987 he visited the main monastery of Menri in Dolanji. He taught about the values and contributions of pre-Buddhist religion to Tibetan culture and issued a letter in which he emphasized that Bön is the indigenous religion of Tibet and the fifth school of spiritual tradition (Dalai Lama 1987). This letter was posted on the official website of Menri monastery after a second visit of the Dalai Lama to Dolanji in 2007.

All of this does not translate into the attitude of the Buddhist population to the Bönpos which would change at once. Some of my respondents in their thirties remember suffering school harassment because of their religious affiliation. However, in Tibetan schools in exile, the pejorative approach of teachers to pupils from Bönpo families is changing, especially after the addition to the Tibetan school curriculum elements of knowledge on the pre-Buddhist history of Tibet. In 1988, the Council for Tibetan Education at the Dalai Lama's Office, in cooperation with the then Bönpo representative in the Tibetan National Assembly, published an illustrated book depicting the story of Tönpa Shenrab, the founder of the Bön religion, written in 1960 by Sangye Tenzin, the then main teacher of Menri. This book has also found its way onto the reading list for Tibetan students (Sangye Tenzin n.d.p.).

THE BÖNPO POPULATION

There were two main reasons why monks agitated for Himalayan inhabitants to send their children to a boarding school for the Bönpo in India: First was the fact that in 1980s less and less Tibetan Bönpo families were settling in Dolanji and community

from ethnological fieldwork in the archives of the author). Therefore, this version may differ in detail from the current state of affairs existing. However, I am more interested in the memory and content conveyed to believers and a wider circle of interested people, as well as those reproduced in brochures and distributed by the monastery mainly among Westerners and tourists as potential sponsors.

leaders became afraid that the population could easily transfer their religious allegiances to Tibetan Buddhism. As a result, they started to expand the population in Dolanji by combining the Himalayan Bönpos with Tibetans. The second reason for this concern was because of the amount of financial subsidies received by the Tibetan refugee camp from the Tibetan Government in Exile and the Indian authorities which began to wane. As less newcomer registered in the camp, less money was received. One of the main goals of monks' agitation among Himalayan inhabitants was to raise children in a compact and homogeneous community of Bönpos and thus maintain the vitality of the culture and religion for future generations. As a result, in the years 1987–2016, only 800 children came to Dolanji[18]. The Triten Norbutse monastery in Kathmandu used to receive only boys, so the number of children learning there became much lower than in Indian Dolanji.

The high numbers of children migrating, so how massive this phenomenon has become among Himalayan inhabitants, are not only confirmed by my own field observations (In 2009, in Jomsom, Mustang and nearby hamlets almost every family had a child or children sent to be educated outside the district), but also by statistical data that can be deduced.

Population and demographic studies by the Central Tibetan Administration in Dharamsala do not give detailed information about how many Tibetan Bönpo families there are in contrast to followers of Tibetan Buddhism[19]. Conducting such research would be very difficult because along with Tibetan refugees from Bönpo families, there are also representatives of Tibetan ethnic groups from Nepal who are not refugees, but are in the camp to boost the Bonpo population. Thereby, when conducting statistical surveys aimed at calculating the population of Bön religious followers among Tibetans, it would be necessary during research to differentiate between families who are not refugees (they do not come from Tibet, but from the Himalayas, although they live in the camp). It is a very socially and politically sensitive issue and the Tibetan authorities try to turn a blind eye to it.

The Nepali government does not distinguish between Tibetan Buddhism schools either, and includes Bönpo, as all other Himalayan residents, to Buddhists[20]. The only data which exists distinguishing individual Tibetan denominations concern the number of monks and nuns in exile. According to data published by the Tibetan authorities in

---

[18] Data calculated by Nyatri – The Aid Foundation For Children of Tibet and the Himalayas, based on their own observations and census data provided by the managers of educational centers in Dolanji (Himachal Pradesh, India): Bon Children's Home and Bon Children Welfare Centre.

[19] See: Bhatia, Tsegyal Dranyi, Rowley 2002; *Demographic Survey...* 2009 (the last Tibetan census in exile carried out by CTA took place in 2007 and included both refugees in India, as well as in Nepal and Bhutan – a total of almost 130 000 people). http://phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=24426&article=CTA+to+conduct+second+demographic+survey+of+Tibetans+in+exile%22, access Oct. 2011.

[20] See: *Population Census...* 2002; analysis of the results of the census in Nepal in 2001: Dahal 2002.

Dharamsala in 1999, the Tibetan monasteries in India, Nepal and Bhutan founded after 1959, total 181, encompassing 17 376 monks and nuns, of whom 549 lived in 5 monasteries belonging to the Bön tradition. This amounts to 3.16% of the Bönpo population. It is worth noting, however, that among these there were also people who originated from ethnic minorities in the Himalayas who were not refugees but citizens of Nepal.

Statistical surveys carried out in China give religious affiliation. Of the 4.6 million Tibetans living in the Tibet Autonomous Region and the Qinghai and Sichuan provinces nearly 160 000 are Bönpos. They make up 3–4% of the population (Baumer 2002, 16[21]). In East Tibet the percentage of the Bönpo population is higher than for the entire area so it should be assumed that 4% is the upper limit of the percentage scale. Krystyna Cech (1987, 11) states, however, that Bönpos constitute about 1% of the entire Tibetan population[22]. Considering that the Bönpo families that emigrated from Tibet mainly came from central and western Tibet and not from the east then it can be assumed that the value given by Cech is at the lower limit of the percentage scale. Therefore, if the Himalayan Bönpo families, mainly from Dolpo and Mustang[23], are included the entire Bönpo population in the Himalayas and Tibet is somewhere between 1 and 4% of the indigenous population of this area. When viewed in the light of other Tibetan and Himalayan groups of Tibetan origin, this is indeed a small percentage.

Looking at statistical analysis from Mustang (Nepal), it can be seen that the phenomenon of sending children to both lay and monastic educational centers is large. In 2014, around 4 120 children and adolescents between the ages of 0 to 19 lived in this district, of which almost 1 000 (over 24% of the population in this age group) were officially educated outside Mustang[24]. A similar situation occurs in Dolpo, but official statistics, for unknown reasons, do not show the real picture. According to data from 2014, over 18 000 children and youths in the 0–19 age-group lived in Dolpo, and only 11 of them were permanently in educational centers[25]. How false this data is can be evidenced by the fact that only in the Bönpo- family-camp in Dolanji, India, about one third of the children raised there come from Dolpo. So a similar proportion should be found as it is among children from Mustang. It can therefore be indirectly inferred that in Dolpo the percentage of children and youths raised and educated

---

[21] Baumer refers to Ma Rong's research published in Kvaerne (ed.) 1994, 509.

[22] In the mid-1980s, when the researcher was conducting research in Dolanji, the total population was around 500 of which the vast majority came from Tibet. She found – based on interviews with Tibetans and her own fieldwork – that half of all Bönpo families in exile lived in the Dolanji Camp. To put this in proper perspective of a 100 000 Tibetan refugee population, it was 1% are Bönpos.

[23] I assume that the percentage ratio of Bönpos to the followers of Tibetan Buddhism in the Himalayas oscillates around 3%.

[24] See: http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Population/VDC-Municipality%20in%20detail/42%20Mustang_ VDCLevelReport.pdf, access 16.10.2016.

[25] See: http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Population/VDC-Municipality%20in%20detail/62%20Dolpa_VDC LevelReport.pdf, access 16.10.2016.

outside the home is high and reaches over 20%. This is an impressive number in regard to migration studies.

The question then arises as to what part of this percentage are children from Bönpo families. If the population of Bönpos in Himalayan ethnic groups is considered to be approximately 3%, and if the population aged 0–19 in Dolpo and Mustang is considered (totaling about 22 185 people), then it would amount to 665 children. Thus, if my calculations are correct then at least 160 children from Bönpo families (24%), in 2014, were brought up and educated far from their homes. This high number is correlated with field information. From the end of the 1980s, Bönpo monks have regularly agitated for families to send their children to their centers. Every year, they organize a group trip for approximately 20–30 small children for education purposes to Dolanji and Kathmandu. This network is very well organized, cooperates with the local -government and district authorities, and has its own leaders and financial resources. Therefore, it can be assumed with a high degree of certainty that with the influence of this institutionalized recruitment activity, the percentage of children from Bönpo families leaving for education is higher in relation to the entire population of Bönpos than children from Buddhist families analogous to the Buddhist population. Statistical analysis shows that the Bonpo as a small religious group sends at least a quarter (if not more) of its children to be educated outside its region of origin. Of the 30 years the educational centers have functioned, around 1000 children were admitted to the Tibetan refugee camp in Dolanji, most of whom came from Dolpo and Mustang. Given the small population of these two Himalayan regions, this means that virtually almost every family has sent one or more of their children to India to be educated and brought up.

How significant this phenomenon is, can be amongst the first generation of young adults Lopa[26] (from Mustang) and Dolpopa[27] (from Dolpo) who have taken advantage of global communication and built up an extensive network of connections based on childhood relationships. This serves them in identifying themselves and helps them to migrate for studying and work purposes all over the world.

MIGRATION OF HIMALAYAN CHILDREN TO TIBETAN REFUGEE CAMPS

The phenomenon of sending Himalayan children to be educated outside their district, began in the 1980s and has intensified in the 21st century. Educational centers where children go are served by other cultural and educational systems than those

---

[26] Mustang is known as a Lo Montang (the land of Lo) and is inhabited mostly by ethnic group of Lopa. The Lopa belongs to Tibeto-Himalayan ethnic groups.

[27] Dolpo is inhabited mostly by ethnic group of the Dolpopa, who belongs to Tibeto-Himalayan ethnic groups.

operating in the Himalayan area. Initially, the inhabitants of Dolpo and Mustang, as well as the neighbouring Himalayan areas from Nepal, sent only boys to monastic schools. Focusing on children from Bönpo families, from 1978, it was possible to send boys to be educated to the Menri monastery in Dolanji. From 1975, there was a local primary school (6 classes) for refugee children. In 1985, several Bönpo monks carried out the first intensive missionary and recruiting activities in Tibet and the Himalayan villages. As a result, in 1987, a dozen or so of the first lay teenagers came to Dolanji and were housed in a barrack near the school. This is how Bon Children's Home came into being at a Tibetan refugee camp. In the following years, small 4–6-year-old children, both girls and boys, began to be admitted. Due to the increasing number of pupils in school year-on-year, the school was extended to eight classes in 1989. In 2003, the right to learn at lower secondary school level (classes 9 and 10) was obtained, and in 2011 this was extended to a full secondary school (11 and 12 grades) with the right to conduct state-level final exams[28]. It only took one decade (2004–2014) for the largest number of migrant children to live in Dolanji – around 500 (including about 300 children in a secular BCH center, about 140 boys in a male monastery and about 60 girls in a nunnery), with the vast majority not Tibetan refugees, nor their children but instead inhabitants of the Nepalese Himalayas[29].

The regular recruitment activities of monks in Himalayan regions and their offer to take children to the Tibetan refugee camps and educational centers for Bönpos in Kathmandu and Himachal Pradesh met with a positive response, especially from Mustang and Dolpo inhabitants. They saw in the monks' proposition a solution to their problems in regards to education and in helping to maintain future generations.

In the second half of the twentieth century and into the 21st, there existed a developed international system of assistance for Tibetan refugees residing in India and Nepal, where none existed for other marginalized inhabitants of the Himalayas. They belonged to the poorest population of one of the poorest countries in the world – Nepal. Illiteracy was rife mainly due to a lack of access to education and the Kingdom of Nepal did not invest in the development of these regions due to the extremely difficult climatic and geographical conditions and low population density which pertained. An important factor adding to the neglect of the Himalayan regions was Nepalese ethnic policy, in which groups belonging to Tibetan ethnic groups had lower status than others and thus were treated as not fully Nepali. They were distinguished by racial origin (Mongoloid appearance), culture (of Tibetan origin), languages (from the Tibetan-Burmese group), religions (Buddhism and Bön), customs, traditions and a differing history. Some of the Himalayan valleys were incorporated into the Nepalese state only in the twentieth

---

[28] Data based on the author's field studies and the official school website (https://www.cstdholanji.org/english-aboutschool).

[29] Data obtained in the field and from the Nyatri Foundation.

century (the Mustang Kingdom in 1976). In these regions, memories of independence and self-determination were lively, and thus – it was uncertain as to how well they would take to the integration policies of Nepal. The Himalayan population required the support of international organizations, but few worked on a regular basis to develop these communities, focusing their efforts mainly on helping Tibetans.

The Himalayan people decided to use their resemblance to the Tibetans to benefit from NGOs' help. A case in point being the center I studied in Dolanji. The Tibetan refugee camp in this Indian village is intended for Tibetan Bönpo families. However, children from Bön families from the Himalayas were also admitted to the boarding school and monasteries. To be able to enroll them in the school, register them at the center and receive subsidies for them, the leaders recorded them as Tibetans, changing their place of origin accordingly in the register, and sometimes also their names (if they did not sound Tibetan enough). In this way, the center grew in numbers, received higher government subsidies and attracted more and more Western sponsors. In return, the center offered free, good education at elementary school level and later secondary. Families were exempt from any children-related fees and expenses, which meant that more and more parents were in positions to send their children there. Another important motivating factor behind sending children outside of Nepal was the civil war in 2001–2007. It was during this period that most children came to Dolanji. The Maoist guerilla groups had their headquarters in the Himalayas, mainly in Mustang and Dolpo, regularly taking captives among the population, including children. To protect them, they were sent to schools in Kathmandu and India.

During the aforementioned civil war, several aid organizations from the West began to operate in Nepal. Foreigners established them on the spot, mainly to save street children. However, only after a catastrophic series of earthquakes ,in 2015, did Nepal receive structural assistance. Hundreds of NGOs began working in and for Nepal, which resulted in not only the reconstruction of the country, but also the emergence of new road, electric, telephone, internet and school infrastructure, which found its way to remote villages also. As a result, we have observed a decline over the last two years in parents sending small children to Indian boarding schools and an upsurge in putting them in schools closer to home (In 2017 there are only about 150 children in BCH, compared to over 300 in 2007).

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

Analyzing the size of the Bönpo population, the fears of Bön leaders regarding their culture and community being absorbed by a dominant Buddhist culture, are understandable. Hence, in teachings, official self-presentations and all kinds of conversations, geshes emphasize the need to integrate Bönpos, support them and

Girls from Bon Children's Home in Dolanji (H.P., India) 2004. Photo A. Szymoszyn.

develop their identity and awareness of Bön. These objectives justify the leaders' actions in accepting not only Tibetan refugees and their descendants into the Tibetan center for Bönpo families, but now also mainly representatives of the Himalayan ethnic groups from Nepal. The supremacy of religious and cultural identification over ethnic identification is intensively promoted. This is manifested in the organizing structural system of the camp, its socio-religious activity and religious teaching of children and youths. Nonetheless, clan, ethnic and national divisions function among them in the centers, building informal structures between them, compared to those known from their home lands. The solution for traditional divisions is to unify (for all Tibetan schools in exile) education and upbringing in a spirit of Tibetan patriotism. In this way, Tibetanness influences deeply and is permanently intertwined with the process of constructiting individual identities of the Himalayan youth grown up in Tibetan social environment. To this complicated mix has to be added the impact of global culture in modern Indian outfit which affects children and teenagers every day at school and during their leisure time. This interesting cultural mix makes most young boarding school-graduates in adulthood define their own identity as multicultural[30].

[30] The issue of transculturality and identity of Himalayan youth I discuss in another article being prepared for publication.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B a n s a l B. L. 1999. *Encounter of Bon with Buddhism in Tibet*. Delhi.

B a r e j a - S t a r z y ń s k a A. and M e j o r M. 2002. *Klasyczny język tybetański*. Warszawa.

B a u m e r C. 2002. *Tibet's Ancient Religion Bön*, Graz.

B h a t i a S., T s e g y a l D r a n y i , R o w l e y D. 2002. A social and demographic study of Tibetan refugees in India. *Social Science & Medicine* 54 (3, February 2002), 411–422.

B o n B i b l i o g r a p h y. 2011. *Bon Bibliography in THL Bibliographies*. Dharamsala: The Tibetan and Himalayan Library. http://www.thlib.org/bibliographies/wiki/bon%20bibliography.html. Access Oct. 2011.

C e c h K. 1987. *The Social and Religious Identity of the Tibetan Bonpos with Special Reference to a North-West Himalayan Settlement*. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oxford (pdf shared in the University of Virginia Library in 2008).

D a h a l D. R. 2002. *Social Composition of the Population: Caste/ Ethnicity and Religion in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.

D e m o g r a p h i c S u r v e y. 2009. *Demographic Survey of Tibetans in Exile*. Dharamsala: Planning Commission CTA. http://phayul.com/news/article.aspx?id=24426&article=CTA+to+conduct+second+demographic+survey+of+Tibetans+in+exile%22. Access Oct. 2011.

G u a r d R. (ed.) 1995. *The Twelve Deeds. A Brief Life Story of Tonpa Shenrab, the Founder of the Bon Religion*. Transl. Sangye Tandar. New Delhi, Dharamsala: LTWA.

K a r m a y S. G. 1998. *The Arrow and the Spindle. Studies in History, Myths, Rituals and Beliefs in Tibet*. Kathmandu.

K v a e r n e P. 1977. Continuity and Change in Tibetan Monasticism. In Chai-Shin Yu (ed.), *Korean and Asian Religious Tradition*. Toronto, 83–98.

K v a e r n e P. 1985. *Tibet – Bon – Religion. A Death Ritual of the Tibetan Bonpos*. Leiden.

K v a e r n e P. 1990. *The Bön Religion of Tibet, a Survey of Research*. NIAS Report. Kobenhaven, 143–153.

K v a e r n e P. 1995. *The Bon Religion of Tibet. The Iconography of a Living Tradition*, London.

K v a e r n e P. (ed.) 1994. *Tibetan Studies*. Oslo: Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture.

M a r t i n D. 1997. *An annotated Bibliography of articles and Books about Bon* (*English, French and German, primarily, but also including some recent articles from Tibetan-language periodicals*). (Unpublished version shared in the Śardza Ling Institute archive in Poland).

M a r t i n D. 1999. 'Ol-mo-lung-ring, the Original Holy Place. In T. Huber (ed.), *Sacred Spaces and Powerful Places in Tibetan Culture*. Dharamsala: LTWA, 258–301.

N a m k h a i N o r b u. 1995. *Drung, Due and Bön. Narrations, symbolic languages and the Bön tradition in ancient Tibet*. Dharamsala: LTWA.

N y i m a D a k p a. 2005. *Opening the Door to Bön*. Ithaca, New York, Boulder, Colorado.

P o p u l a t i o n C e n s u s. 2002. *Population Census 2001 National Report*. Kathmandu: Central Bureau of Statistics.

R e l i g i o n a n d C u l t u r e A f f a i r s. 1999. Dharamsala: Central Tibetan Administration. www.tibet.com/Govt/rel-cul.html. Access 12.05.1999.

R e y n o l d s J. M. 2005. *The Oral Tradition from Zhang-Zhung. An Introduction to the Bonpo Dzogchen Teachings of the Oral Tradition from Zhang-zhung known as the Zhang-zhung snyan-rgyud*. Kathmandu.

R o s s i D. 1999. *The Philosophical View of the Great Perfection in the Tibetan Bon Religion*. Ithaca, New York.

S a n g y e T e n z i n. n.d.p. Dwanaście czynów Tenpy Szenraba. Krótka historia życia założyciela religii bon. *Termy, Nauki, Komentarze Tradycji Jungdung Bon* 4. Warszawa: Garuda Association in Poland.

S n e l l g r o v e D. and R i c h a r d s o n H. 1978. *Tybet. Zarys historii kultury*. Warszawa.

S n e l l g r o v e D. L. (ed., transl.) 1980. *The Nine Ways of Bon. Excerpts from gZi-brjid*. Boulder.

S u b b a T. B. 1990. *Flight and Adaptation. Tibetan Refugees in the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalaya*. Dharamsala: LTWA.

T e n z i n G y a t s o t h e D a l a i L a m a 1 4 t h. 1987. *A Letter from H.H. The Dalai Lama* [to the Bonpo community]. www.bonfoundation.org/letter.html. Access Oct. 2011.

T e n z i n W a n g y a l. 1993 (2000). *Wonders of the Natural Mind: The Essence of Dzogchen in the Native Bon Tradition of Tibet*. Ithaca – New York – Boulder.

T e n z i n W a n g y a l. 2002. *Healing with Form, Energy and Light. The Five Elements in the Tibetan Shamanism, Tantra, and Dzogchen*. Ithaca – New York – Boulder.

T h e T r a n s l i t e r a t i o n a n d T r a n s c r i p t i o n o f T i b e t a n. Tibetan & Himalayan Library. http://www.thlib.org/reference/transliteration/sitewiki/26a34146-33a6-48ce-001e-f16ce7908a6a/tibetan%20transliteration%20and%20transcription.html. Access Oct. 2011.

U r b a ń s k a - S z y m o s z y n A. 2004. The Spreading of Bon Culture Among Tibetan Refugees. Polish Implications. *Ethnologia Polona* 25, 117–134.

U r b a ń s k a - S z y m o s z y n A. 2006. Rozwój kultury bön wśród uchodźców tybetańskich w Indiach. Implikacje europejskie. In J. Zamojski (ed.), Migracje i Kultura. Migracje i społeczeństwo. 11. Warszawa, 264–283.

U r b a ń s k a - S z y m o s z y n A. 2011. Globalizacja i glokalizacja religii bon na przykładzie społeczności Ligmincha w Stanach Zjednoczonych i Polsce. *Lud* 45, 177–202.

W y l i e T. V. 1959. A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription. *Harvard Journal of Asian Studies* 22, 261–267.

Internet sources:

Central School For Tibetans in Dolanji – https://www.cstdholanji.org/english-aboutschool. Access 16.10.2016.

The Nepalese Government's census of Mustang – http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Population/VDC-Municipality%20in%20detail/42%20Mustang_VDCLevelReport.pdf. Access 16.10.2016.

The Nepalese Government's census of Dolpo – http://cbs.gov.np/image/data/Population/VDC-Municipality%20in%20detail/62%20Dolpa_VDCLevelReport.pdf. Access 16.10.2016.

Tibetan Bon Foundation – www.bonfoundation.org. Access Sept. 2017.

Triten Norbutse monastery history – http://www.triten.org/TR/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=46&Itemid=53. Access Sept. 2017.

33rd Trizin Lungtok Tenpai Nyima Rinpoche bios – http://www.ligmincha.org/index.php/en/boen-buddhism/lineage-of-teachers/hh-lungtok-tenpai-nyima.html. Access Sept. 2017.

34th Trizin Geshe Dawa Dhargyal bios – http://www.ligmincha.org/en/international-news/421-34th-menri-trizin.html. Access Jan. 2018.

Yongdzin Lobpön Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche bios – http://www.ligmincha.org/index.php/en/boen-buddhism/lineage-of-teachers/yongdzin-rinpoche.html. Access Sept. 2017.

Author's address:

Anna Szymoszyn, Ph.D.
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology
Polish Academy of Sciences
ul. Rubież 46, 61-612 Poznań, POLAND
e-mail: etnopan@iaepan.poznan.pl

FROM THE MICHELANGELO OF LHASA
TO THE PROBLEM OF TIBETAN IDENTITY

BÉLA KELÉNYI

FERENC HOPP MUSEUM OF ASIATIC ARTS, BUDAPEST

The author, through the analysis of a case study, examines the issue of building and evolving identity under the influence of migration and cultural variation. Throughout the biographic method employed, he presents the Tibetan artist, Gonkar Gyatso and his works, showcasing how his approach to his own identity has changed over the years.

*   *   *

Autor, analizując studium przypadku, prezentuje zagadnienie budowania i ewoluowania tożsamości pod wpływem migracji i zmienności kulturowej. Posługując się metodą biograficzną, przedstawia tybetańskiego artystę, Gonkar Gyatso, i jego prace ukazujące zmianę w podejściu do własnej tożsamości na przestrzeni lat.

K e y w o r d s: identity, Tibetan, art, Gonkar Gyatso, thangka.

In 2003, an art show under the title *Radiant Transmission: Contemporary Master-pieces of Tibetan Buddhist Art* was opened in the October Gallery, London. Presenting works by contemporary Nepalese, Tibetan, Mongolian and English artists, the pieces were curated by the Tibetan art expert Robert Beer and organized by art historian Zara Fleming, a specialist in Tibetan art.

The exhibition was the first to introduce modern Tantric art to England. In addition to the exhibition of thangkas (Tibetan Buddhist painting using traditional methods but in a characteristic style) on display, particular significance was given to the work of Gonkar Gyatso[1] (Tib. *Gong dkar rgya mtsho*), a Tibetan artist, who migrated to England in 1996 and who presented a four-part photo ensemble entitled *My identity*. In these pictures he portrayed himself in four different roles: as a traditional thangka-painter, a Red Guard working on a Mao icon, a refugee living in India painting the Dalai Lama's portrait, and finally a modern artist forming a mysterious, nonfigurative mandala-like depiction.

Gonkar Gyatso is an artist of British citizenship, originating from Tibet, who was educated in Beijing, Lhasa, Dharamsala and London and who now normally resides in

---

[1] Gongkar Gyatso's bio – see: http://gonkargyatso.com/about-the-artist/artist's-bio. Access: 10.10.2017.

New York. He was born in 1961 in Lhasa as the son of a PLA[2] soldier, resulting in his childhood being affected by communist ideology. He studied traditional Chinese ink painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Central Institute of Nationalities, Beijing. He was the first Tibetan to paint a mural for the Great Hall of the People in Beijing in 1985 but he also became acquainted with Western painting styles. Returning to Lhasa, he studied traditional Tibetan art and became a founder of "The Sweet Tea House" movement, involving contemporary Tibetan artists[3].

He initiated his career with nonfigurative paintings in the early eighties. Later in 1989, shocked by the demonstrations in Lhasa and the events of Tienanmen Square, he created his famous Red Buddha painting. Going into exile to Dharamsala in 1992, he finally settled in London in 1996 when he was 35. His recent works focus on the current situation of Tibetan Buddhism and are characterized by irony, regarding a western understanding of the word. As he said in an interview, although he is only a lay Buddhist, this does not stop him from showing not only what he knows about being Buddhist, but also comparing the Buddhist approach to that of Western culture:

> "Due to the upbringing I never understood fully behind the Buddha [as a Buddhist I should follow the Buddha's understanding of] a serious religious significance [in drawing]. I have participated to some extent in traditional thangka-training when I went into exile and lived in Dharamsala, but these were only introductory skills. So, I took stock of what I knew about Buddhism and compared it with what I knew of western culture – the many interpretations Buddhism has gone through varying with the fashion and trends [at the time]" (Scoggin 2007).

However, among Gonkar Gyatso's works is not primarily his interpretations of Buddha, but the *My identity* series seems to have provoked the most vivid reactions among audience. A number of art historians have studied it, including Clare Harris, who gave an excellent analysis of it in her new book. She raised important questions such as the meaning of identity for Tibetans who live in a global world, what they identify with in the Western world and Western attitudes to Tibet (Harris 2012, 249–253). I am of the opinion that some other issues need to be addressed in relation to background-image-personages and objects included in the compositions. These aspects may deepen understanding of this series and place it in a new and more complex context.

It is well known that Gyatso was inspired by a photograph depicting the thangka painter of the 13th Dalai Lama, Tsering Döndrup (Tib. *Tshe ring don grub*, 1902–1947),

---

[2] PLA – People's Liberation Army in China.

[3] „Emerging from the aftershocks, debris and trauma of the Cultural Revolution, a loose-knit group of young Lhasa artists in the early and mid-eighties decided to come together to better utilize their individual creativity and to promote their own works. They jokingly called themselves the Sweet Tea House Movement." Citated from Jamyang Norbu's blog: http://www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2014/10/27/a-cup-of-tea-and-a-slice-of-art-please/. Access: 10.10.2017.

while working in Norbulingka, the summer residence of the Dalai Lama. The photograph was taken by the American ethnologist and botanist, Charles Suydam Cutting (1889–1972) in 1937. He is as good a person as any to start with.

A national tennis champion, Cutting is recognized as the first American allowed to enter the forbidden city of Lhasa. After graduating from Harvard University he worked as an engineer for the M. W. Kellogg Company and in 1925 he accompanied the sons of Theodore Roosevelt (the 26th President of the USA) to Ladakh and Turkestan. On this expedition in the company of Theodore Jr. Roosevelt (1887–1944), and Kermit Roosevelt (1889–1943) he collected materials for the Chicago Field Museum of Natural History and then travelled to Ethiopia, Burma and China. He regarded his 3 visits to Tibet and two to Lhasa as particular highlights (Cutting 1947, ix). Thanks to a friendship struck up with the British political officer in charge of Sikkim and Tibet, Frederick Marshman Bailey (1882–1967), he was allowed to visit the South Tibetan Gyantse and Kampa Dzong in 1930 which were then open to British trade. From 1931, he also corresponded with the 13th Dalai Lama. Finally, in 1935, through his Tibetan connections, he was able to travel to Shigatse and Lhasa together with an English art dealer, Arthur Vernay (1877–1960), collecting for the American Museum of Natural History, New York. In 1937, Cutting returned to Lhasa with his wife, Helen (Reynolds and Heller 1983, 61; see also Reynolds 1999, 17). On this trip, recorded in his book *The Fire Ox and Other Years* ("Fire-Ox" signified the year 1937 in the Tibetan calendar) published in 1947, he took his famous photo of Tsering Döndrup.

Although Cutting did not publish the photograph in his book, he described in detail his impressions of the young painter, whom he first met in the Potala, and whom he characterized rather superficially:

> "Work was still in progress on the tomb of the last Dalai Lama at the top of the Potala. In a room forty by twenty, fifteen to twenty feet high, Tsering, that sensitive young Michelangelo of Lhasa, and several others were busy on a series of incredibly fine miniatures. Tsering, having served the ruler during his life, was now contributing to his posthumous glory. Every inch of wall and ceiling eventually would be filled with the lovely miniatures depicting the whole Buddhist pantheon, with mythology and motor-cars mixed in with great ingenuity. There were gods, goddesses, angels and demons. It would take years, perhaps, for the artists to complete this microscopic type of frescoing, which they did with loving care. Tsering's plight reminded one of Michelangelo, wearing steel-rimmed glasses to save his eyes as he fretted and fumed on the Sistine ceiling" (Cutting 1947, 218).

Shortly thereafter, Cutting visited the Norbulingka, where the murals of some rooms were painted by the young Tsering too. The famous photograph was most probably taken at that time. But his most interesting story in relation to Tsering suggests that Tibetan painters were already being attracted to a western style of painting that was as yet barely known to them. Cutting asked Tsering to paint a portrait of him and of his wife:

"He had always to paint from life, he explained, but up to now he had been occupied with divinities. To this my wife replied amiably that he might, if he wished, paint us as gods and goddesses. After a week's time the picture appeared, with cross eyes for me and two double chins for my wife. We had seen likenesses of ourselves before but never had we emerged so completely and perfectly figures [of] fun. The occidental face and figure were for this man who, year in, year out, turned out exquisite, magical divinities by square yard" (Cutting 1947, 230).

Tsering Döndrup was the senior thangka painter of the 13th Dalai Lama, and also reached a lower edge official rank, the *letsen* (Tib. *las tshan*) (Jackson 2012, 38). His Tibetan biography was written by a famous contemporary thangka painter of the Menri school and university professor, Tenpa Rabten (Tsering Döndrup was his paternal uncle) (Jackson 2012, 38):

"Letsen Tsering Döndrup (Tib. *las tshan Tshe ring don grub*) was born in [the] Chusumdzong district of the Tibetan Lhoka prefecture, in a place called 'The lowest among the new houses lying on an upper nomadic area', as son of the thangka painter Pema Künsang and Sönam Dolma, in the fifteenth cycle of the Tiger-Water year (1902). Since he was eight years old, it took him two years to learn reading and writing without any difficulty [from] his maternal uncle, in Dokhar Chöde[4]. From the age of ten he grazed the cows of their house and with the help of his karmic abilities (Tib. *chags bag*) discovered earlier, he was able to learn to draw a variety of small animals and flowers without the aid of an art teacher. Around the age of twelve his father took him to Lhasa and introduced him to the reputable, famous and educated master, Tsering Gyau (Tib. *Tshe ring rgya'u*)[5], the chief painter, to learn the craft. His resulting joy from the acquired 'drizzle' and later 'peacock-body' [technique][6] could not be put into words. He practiced day and night with tireless diligence, and by the respect the three doors[7] with the greatest reverence, and prostrating at his feet serviced him with three kinds of pleasing actions[8], resulting in not long being able to expand his knowledge on the theory of Tibetan painting and on the drawing method of proportions, including specific oral instructions. He was about eighteen years old when he joined the highest-level thangka painter workshop, from whence he entered into government service in the Norbulingka and other places. When he was twenty-one, he reached the rank of lesser craft foreman (Tib. *dbu chung*). When Victorious Lord (Tib. *rGyal dbang*), that is the 13th Dalai Lama (1876–1933), learned of his unparalleled talent, leaving out the rank of chief craftsman (Tib. *dbu chen*), he elevated him directly to the rank of belonging to his retinue. In the presence of older painters he commented on their instructions being good but behind their back [he said] ironically that: 'the young and experienced can cast away instructions.' Although his life was short, his unique talent and honest nature meant that he gradually became one of the most respected leaders amongst all paint-ers. He himself created many significant works in the field of view and vision, based on joint plans and with the help of detailed advice emanating from the government official Letsen Yeshe Gyatso,

---

[4] Dokhar Chöde (*mDo mkhar chos sde*), a monastery belonging to the Kadampa sect in Lhoka prefecture.
[5] Epa Uchen Tsering Gyau (1872–1935) was Tenpa Rapten's grandfather who was born in a small village of the *E* district. On his life see: bsTan pa rab brtan 2007, 177–179.
[6] These are likely to be the two types of shading used in thangka painting. The "drizzle" (*char zhim bu*) perhaps refers to the technique of "rain-like shading" (*char mdangs*): an impression achieved by vertical brush strokes, while the "peacock's body" (*rma bya'i lus*) refers to the "spread-on shading" (*byug mdangs*) technique, similar to a peacock's tail, see: Jackson 1984, 111.
[7] The three doors (*sgo gsum*) of the body: speech and mind, physical and verbal and mental activities.
[8] Three ways of pleasing the guru (*mnyes pa gsum*) by means of material things, service and practice.

he completed frescoes in the bedroom of Norbulingka, murals and coloured the upper, middle and lower parts of the stupa-temple for Victorious Lord's thirteenth incarnation in the Potala Palace. In addition, he himself created murals illustrating the life of the thirteenth incarnation of the Victorious Lord. Furthermore, in the lower College of Sera Monastery, inside the assembly hall, he made murals both of the south-west wall and entrance hall, which are stunning works of art. During the lifetime of the Taktra regent[9] he restored the appliqué thangka (*gos sku*) of the Potala Palace and carried out preservation works of its general design and detailed representation together with Yeshe Gyatso. His ability to direct [operations] is still regarded with amazement, reaching beyond words and thoughts. For their perfectly realised work of the appliqué thangka, both artists received the salary of the rank of *letsenpa* [renown followed suit]. Tsering passed away at the age of forty-six in the sixteenth year of the cycle of the Fire-Pig (1947)" (bsTan pa rab brtan 2007, 193–195)[10].

It can be regarded as symbolic that Gonkar Gyatso saw Cutting's photograph for the first time on the cover of David Jackson's famous book on Tibetan painting, published in 1984 (Harris 2012, 296, fn. 17). This book still retains its reputation as the most complete western book on Tibetan painting techniques and this photo has become a symbol of Tibetan art. It is also not mere coincidence that Cutting was the first American to enter Lhasa and came to embody the barely known outside world for Tsering Döndrup. Tsering painted scenes from the life of the last independent Dalai Lama around his stupa. Thus, his figure also symbolizes the continuity of Tibetan independence. It is also of special importance that Döndrup was probably one of the first Tibetan painters who tried to paint portraits in accordance with Western ideas.

For a complete comprehension of Gonkar Gyatso's gesture, I would first like to ask how we see the photo taken by Cutting in fact, that is the painter himself, his environment and the picture painted by him. It appears already at first glance that the photo is a "double" representation as we not only see what the photographer wished to capture about Tsering but also what the subject of the photo wanted to show to the photographer himself. A man dressed in traditional Tibetan clothes is sitting in front of a painted canvas hanging from a frame. Tsering is wearing a common garment of Tibet, called a *chuba* (Tib.: *phyu pa*), which is a traditional robe that leaves the right arm unsheathed. His long hair is pigtailed – like most Tibetan painters' hair nowadays unlike government officials or secular aristocrats who wear theirs in a chignon – and he has an elegant, thin moustache. He is clearly proud of his long earring (Tib.: *sog byil*) decorated with a turquoise hanging from his left ear onto his shoulder, which indicates his official rank. On his left hand, resting on his knee, he is wearing an ornate ring which together with his long nails, expresses nobility. All of this is reinforced by Cutting's description of Tsering:

> "Handsome and charming to begin with, the young man cuts a dashing figure with his pale-green blouse one sleeve of wine-red covering his arm with the other hanging down; an enormous jade ring on his left thumb and a smaller mandarin jade on his right ring finger" (Cutting 1947, 230).

---

[9] *Srid skyong Stag brag, Ngag dbang gsung rab grub thob bstan pa'i rgyal mtshan* (1874–1952), became Regent in 1941.
[10] With interpretation of the text I am grateful for the help of Zsóka Gelle.

Charles Cutting's photograph of Tsering Döndrup taken in 1937 in Lhasa[11].

The photograph's surroundings contain a typical painted Tibetan table (Tib. *lcog rtse*) decorated with lotus flowers in front of him with the inevitable tea accessories on it: including a small teapot (Tib. *tib bu*). The porcelain cups (Tib. *dkar yol*) are probably used for mixing colours, because other painting implements are also present: a brush holder filled with brushes and a closed box in front of the table, presumably containing the colours; this has a special role in Gyatso's photos. On the table, a foraminous Chinese rock, the so-called "scholars' rock" (Ch. *gōngshí*) also appears to express the depicted man's affection for an ideal life in nature. This clearly reflects the Chinese fashion prevailing at that time amongst educated people (Linrothe 2004, 22). In front of Tsering, a folded carpet (Tib. *kha gdan*) is visible, while on a small table next to him can be seen accessories of Tibetan homes such as small trees and flowers in pots.

The picture before Tsering shows the traditional working method of Tibetan painters. A canvas is also stretched over a frame but a different technique is being employed.

[11] http://tibetanmaterialhistory.wikischolars.columbia.edu/file/view/bob1-3.jpg/100489381/bob1-3.jpg. Access: 10.12.2017.

Firstly, an appropriate-size canvas for the painting (Tib. *ras gzhi*) is sewn onto a narrow, flexible inner frame made of bamboo (Tib. *rgyong shing*). Then an outer frame (Tib. *rkyang shing*) is constructed and the framed canvas with zig-zag stitches with a thicker cord is affixed. Thus, the cord can also be applied to stretch the canvas (Jackson 2012, 38). In the photo ,the painting is almost completed; Tsering Döndrup probably is just adding the final touches to his picture.

The figure in the almost completed painting is that of Vādisiṁha Mañjughoṣa (Tib. *'Jam dbyangs smra ba'i seng ge*), a manifestation of Bodhisattva Mañjuśri, representing the knowledge of the Buddhas, that is Mañjuśri as "Lion of Debaters". According to David Jackson, this work was painted in the mid-Tibetan Eri (Tib. *e bris*) style, which was typical in the twenties and thirties of the 20th c. when the photograph was taken. In his description of the decorative details:

> "The clouds in particular are more elaborately convoluted and shaded than in many Eri paintings of the period. Note also the Chinese tree that grows upward to the left at a slant, behind the body nimbus of the main figure, making the overall composition asymmetrical" (Jackson 2012, 38).

Practitioners of this style were usually born in Lhasa or – as Tsering Gyau – came from the region of E (Tib. *E*), the south-eastern part of the central Ü (Tib. *dBus*) province, after which the style was named. The *Eri* was the most approved style of the Lhasa government; so much so that it was sometimes referred to as the "government style" (Tib. *gzhung ris*) and used by artists who belonged to the artisans office (Tib. *Zhol 'dod dpal las khung*) (Jackson 2012, 38). Many examples of this style can be found among the wall paintings of the Potala and the Norbulingka, which were painted during the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama.

After listing the main elements of the photograph taken of Tsering Döndrup, let us now proceed to focus on how Gonkar Gyatso transformed this photo into a four-part series given the fact that this typical picture-in-picture series not only closely relates to Gyatso's life (a man born in 1961 who began his career in Tibet and then moved to Beijing; later to return to Tibet before leaving for Dharamsala and later for London) but is also connected to the historical situation emerging from the Tibetan uprising of 1959 which has influenced the lives of many Tibetan generations even up to this present day.

Comparing the Gyatso picture with the one from 1937, we can see that Gyatso completely fits into the role of the Tibetan thangka painter, which was Tsering Dönrdup.

The picture in fact recalls in a subtle way European self-portraits *an face*. The artist is gazing from the picture, as if looking at himself in a mirror in front of him and seeking eye contact with the viewer of the image.

Gyatso is sitting in traditional Tibetan dress in front of the canvas, his hair in a bun with a long earring donating his official position. In front of him tea and painting implements are placed on a table (interestingly, the Chinese rock is missing). He is

Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity* No. 1, C-Print, 2003.

surrounded by the type of furniture used in Tibetan homes and the vajra-motif of the wall painting refers to Tibetan Buddhism. All these are obviously included to evoke traditional Tibet before the Chinese occupation whilst also referring to certain periods of his own life.

Nevertheless, as is well known, Gyatso has never become a thangka painter. Returning from Beijing to Lhasa, he studied traditional Tibetan artworks and after emigrating for three years (1993–1996) he learned traditional thangka painting from master Sangay Yeshi in Dharamsala. However, he took up painting Buddha representations under his own approach (Harris 1997, 174). This is also evident from the photograph where he swaps the Mañjuśri image originally present in Cutting's photo for an *unfinished* Śākyamuni Buddha one including his two disciples, the most common subjects for Tibetan painters. However, 28 other unfinished Buddha images also appear around them, presumably following the description present in the 27th chapter of Buddhavaṁsa describing past Buddhas and the future Buddha, Maitreya. If this supposition is correct, it is especially interesting, because the system described in this important work of the Theravāda Buddhism is a completely unusual representation in Tibet (See: Allinger 2007, 73–80).

Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity* No. 2, C-Print, 2003.

In the second photo Gyatso personifies a Red Guard wearing the green uniform of the People's Liberation Army, completed with the Mao badge and the Red Guard armband (Ch. *hongweibing*), painting a picture of Mao.

Everything is different from the previous picture apart from the black box in front of Gyatso. In the concrete floored room the wall is covered with Chinese newspapers (like in most Chinese homes during this period) and in the background on a laminate Formica cupboard, a Mao bust is positioned on top of some red books.

Next to Gyatso, on a red lacquered Chinese table, a mug full of brushes is placed. This is another accessory of the Mao cult because of the Mao picture on the mug. Moreover, in the thangka in front of Gyatso, Buddha Shakyamuni is transformed into the smiling Great Helmsman, as if a mirror image of the artist. In Tibet, this was the period of the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) when priceless monuments were destroyed and traditional religious art was replaced by Socialist Realism. For Gyatso, it brought back his childhood experiences of the nature of the Cultural Revolution which also impacted on his family life: "Everything in our home was Chinese and the entire family strictly adhered to party guidelines" (Reilly 2012, 10).

The third picture of the series shows Gyatso as a long haired Tibetan artist, similar to a hippy, living in India.

Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity* No. 3, C-Print, 2003.

The stone-flagged room covered with corrugated iron evokes the Indian accommodation of Tibetan refugees. The only furnishing present is a dark red suitcase (the
colour of Tibetan monks' robes), referring to their permanent homelessness with
a "Free Tibet" vignette. A framed photograph of the patron saint of emigration, the
14th Dalai Lama is placed on top of the suitcase, covered with a *khatak* (Tib. *kha btags*).
The table next to Gyatso in the previous pictures is replaced by a crate of the popular
Indian Bangla beer, with factory colours in a tube on top, two brass bowls for their
mixing and brushes in a tin.

    Most interestingly in the painting is that in front of Gyatso, Mao has become
a portrait of the 14th Dalai Lama. This may be understood as a summary of the desires
of a life in emigration. In the top third of the painting, above the mountain ranges and
clouds, a portrait of the Dalai Lama, framed with rainbow, is floating like a radiant
Sun. In the middle lies the Potala Palace which is the seat of the Dala Lamas and was
built by the 5th one, symbolizing the religious and secular power of Tibet. Beneath the
place and ironically included can be found the famous column with the inscription in
two languages (Tib. *rdo ring*), which was originally erected in front of the Jokhang and
bears a written record of the Tibetan-Chinese treaty of 821. Thus in the picture, the

Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity* No. 4, C-Print, 2003.

properties of Tibetan Buddhism are juxtaposed with the homelessness of immigrants. Although Tibetan emigration to India was taking place at the time when Gyatso was being born, in Gyatso's life this image refers to the period beginning in 1992, when he emigrated to Dharamsala.

Finally we see the posing, contemporary and cosmopolitan Western artist in an empty, minimalist environment.

Among the white walls on a laminate floor, in place of the Tibetan or Chinese table and beer crate there was now to be found a stainless steel table of the IKEA variety used to hold painting implements. Behind the painter's back, on a practical storage box a bouquet of gladioli takes the place of the Dalai Lama picture and next to the vase of flowers are some strewn fashion magazines. The artist is clad in jeans and trainers and sports a punky hairdo with only the provocatively tattooed "Tibet" (Tib. *Bod*) inscription on his arm giving any identification as to his identity.

However, the painting in front of him is not that of a saint of 'the new era'. It is not Buddha, Mao or the Dalai Lama but instead it is a mystical nonfigurative image reminiscent of a mysterious globe floating in a fire ocean and of a mandala, painted with colours reminiscent of computer graphics. There are no historical, political or

religious references present but only a vision of the artist living entirely in a western world. In terms of Gyatso's life this obviously represents the period starting in 1992 when he arrived in London. Later, he graduated with an MA degree from the Chelsea Art & Design College (1999–2000), received British citizenship and became a frequently exhibiting Western artist.

The creation of series may well have been inspired by Gyatso's new artistic experiences at this time. A likely precursor to *My identity* was *The Swing (After Fragonard)*, an installation made in 2001 by Yinka Shonibare, an artist of West-African origin. Jean-Honoré Fragonard's original picture depicts a frivolous scene where a lady is being swung by her husband, while her lover hiding in a bush gets a vision of what lies under her clothes. Shonibare's work reverses the scene in that a headless lady is swinging free of the presence of men, and her flying slipper refers to the disintegration of aristocracy (or the Western world), which was soon to be seen in the French Revolution. Gyatso wrote about Shonibare's influence:

> "His work attempts to show that all forms of culture and identity are constructed, shaped and reshaped by varying forms of historical conjunctions, appropriations, contestations and rejections" (Gonkar Gyatso 2003, 151).

It seems that in the four images of this series Gyatso was providing a complete answer to the question of his identity. In 2009 he explained this:

> "I was and I am really interested in the 'identity' issue and that probably was one of the reasons why I went to India. Although I say that I found my identity in 1993 and became reconciled to it, I still find that my Tibetanness different from that of other Tibetans. When I was very young, I was strongly influenced by Chinese culture and communist ideologies; I am Tibetan by birth and I am emotionally a Tibetan; I've lived in the West for more than a decade and I am now trying to get involved with mainstream artists in London. I am a sort of combination of different cultures. I think I am different from the Tibetan artists coming from Tibet. I should not talk about 'culture'; I should talk about how I am myself trying to adapt to these situations, changes and to this new environment" (Gonkar Gyatso 2009, 109).

However, in 2015 at a New York exhibition entitled Transcending Tibet: Mapping Contemporary Tibetan Art in the Global Context, organized by the Trace Foundation in Chelsea, Gyatso exhibited the fifth picture of the series.

At first sight, the re-arranged composition seems to represent a crowded and kitschy summary of the pure concept of the four previous pictures. The environment presented combines both the traditional and modern world in a frustratingly confusing manner. The background aims to represent the 21st century including as it does objects of a globalised world manufactured in China: fake Tibetan furniture, plastic religious objects and magazine advertisements on the wall. The picture is undoubtedly crowded on purpose and the separated worlds of the previous pictures are intertwined here: Tibetan, Chinese, Indian and Western elements form an almost inextricable accumula-

5: Gonkar Gyatso *My Identity* No. 5, C-Print, 2015.

tion. The composition no longer focuses on an artist exposed to historical, political or even traditional elements, but instead on a craftsman who has become both famous and fat during the elapsed time period, wearing the earphones of his smartphone. His clothing: the branded western shirt and elegant bow-tie, the wide gold ring on his thumb, the gold rosary beads wrapped around his wrist and the leopard skin wrapped around his waist all refer to his wealth and well-being.

A portrait immediately serves two surprises: On the stretched canvas, in place of the Buddha – Mao – Dalai Lama – Space – Mandala, with the auxiliary lines of the Tibetan iconometry but in western style, we see a female face. As regards how a contemporary Tibetan artist could have learnt this representation, a finger might be pointed at the proportion system in the book of painting by Tsöndu Rabgye and Dorje Rinchen, where a completely different kind of measurement is applied for western-style representations than in Tibetan (brTson 'grus rab rgyas and rDo rje rin chen 2001, 287). The other significant surprise is that the portrait under construction and through which the transfiguration of Gonkar Gyatso's identity can be traced, has now changed into a portrait of the Burmese politician, Aung San Suu Kyi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 "for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights".

As this change is major in comparison to the other representations, I wish to summarize this politician's life. After the violent death of her father, who fought for

Burmese independence, she grew up in India. Later, she studied philosophy, political science and economics at Oxford University. In 1972,she married Michael Aris, a prominent Tibetologist – so a Tibetan line is also involved in the story. In 1988, she returned to Burma to head the National League for Democracy, a party participating in political efforts against the military dictatorship. Although her party won the elections in 1990, the military government did not recognize the result and put Aung San Suu Kyi under house-arrest; thus in 1991 it was her sons who received the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of her. Then she alternated under house arrest, terms of freedom and in jail alternately, until her detention was lifted only in 2010. In 2015, as leader of her party she again won the elections in Myanmar.

This necessarily compacted story impacted on Gonkar Gyatso's life and most importantly in this context, in this picture. Firstly, in Aung San Suu Kyi's personage, Gyatso obviously considers her to be an example of an Asian Democratic politician who adhered to her beliefs throughout seemingly hopeless decades. In addition, each painted thangka image of *My identity* has an ironic aspect, but if Gyatso is interpreted in this light, the image of a politician is not the detail being viewed at ironically but rather the artist himself and his environment. However, in Gyatso's *Reclining Buddha* exhibited at the Venice Biennale in 2009, in a humorous cartoon caption Aung San Suu Kyi wonders whether: "Non-violence is too old-fashioned?"[12], thereby questioning traditional Buddhist values to boot. In fact, currently in Myanmar it is the nationalist Buddhist majority that threatens the existence of the Muslim minority.

The picture-in-picture composition is added to with a Tibetan image in the background. This undoubtedly represents a traditional Tibetan Buddhist subject, because in the background to the left is to be found a thangka with twenty-one Taras. Three different traditions of representation exist. Here, according to the Nyingma (the old school), the figures around the main character are shown in identical pose but with different colours and symbols. Besides evoking traditional art, the thangka is most likely included in the photograph because it visualizes the highly important Tibetan prayer to the twenty-one Taras.

In addition to the thangka, a poster can also be seen in the background, depicting Chinese Communist leaders as a veritable guru-lineage. This reflects the historical situation holding sway in 2015: the past is represented by the cut off face of Mao Zedong at the top and Deng Xiaoping a bit further down (with his forehead cut off). In a row of leaders in black suits and ties, Jiang Zenmin (1993–2003) is on top while slightly below him is Hu Jintao (2003–2013) and bringing up the rear is Xi Jinping (2013), current chairman of the People's Republic of China. Underneath a mass of people adorned with red flags are celebrating on Tiananmen Square. The khatak, familiar from Dalai Lama's image can also be seen here.

[12] See the leaflet on Gyatso's work, released on the occasion of the Venice Biennale, Gonkar Gyatso 2009. See also: Harris 2012, 261.

Next to the poster is an art group's award certificate (Ch. *rongyu zhengshu*). Lying by the artist's leg is an edition of the Shanghai-based weekly magazine, the Oriental Outlook (Ch. *Dong fang zhou kan*). The photo on the wall, torn from Slam Magazine, represents Derrick Rose who is a Chicago Bulls basketball player. Behind the artist, on a flower-decorated wall, is a Chinese advertisement and photo of a Range Rover.

On the cabinet behind Gyatso, a Nike advertisement is pinned and a wide variety of cultural tropes are lined up in stirring confusion: a gilded, presumably plastic incense, a western porcelain statue probably depicting Cupid with angels, a blue monster called Sulley from the film *Monsters Inc,* and a small Tibetan Buddha statue next to it. In front of them is a gilded table prayer wheel which was more than likely made of plastic, accompanied by photos of the Tibetan state oracle Nechung, named after the monastery, and of Dorje Drakden, the protective deity embodied in him.

Above and next to the Buddha statue, is a framed photograph of one of the most famous of Tibetan reincarnations, the 17th Black Hat Gyalwa Karmapa, Orgyen Trinle Dorje (Tib. *O rgyan 'phrin las rdo rje*). His inclusion symbolizes the inner division of Tibet where he was recognized as a reincarnation by Tai Situ Rinpoche, who is representative of one rebirth line of the Karma Kagyu order. This was also approved by the Dalai Lama but opposed by the four regents of the Kagyu order, including the Shamarpa, who accepted instead Trinle Thaye Dorje (Tib. '*Phri las mtha' yas rdo rje*) as the Karmapa, all because of a hidden message by the previous Karmapa. In the fore-ground of Orgyen Trinle Dorje's photography, water cups are placed, symbolizing daily sacrifice. All of this is completed by a liquor-box in the right corner, which is none other than the favoured drink box of Chinese leaders: famous Maotai wheat spirit, a favourite brew of Chairman Mao who liked it to be offered to foreign dignitaries. This is confirmed also by the little Mao bust next to it.

On the cabinet glass a number of other small references are placed. On one cabinet glass be found a sticker representing a Tibetan monk, a ten-pound banknote with the portrait of the British Queen and a postcard of Ṣaḍakṣarī Lokeśvara. On other there is a card with a marijuana leaf, the picture of the 10th Panchen Lama who was first supported then slandered by the Chinese, a photo of a jeep and a drawn illustration of *Gangnam Style*: a performance by the South Korean singer, Psy.

On a table near the artist, surrounded by the painter's implements and next to a prayer wheel, teacup and a small copper kettle, there is a coco-cola can symbolizing modern times. It can therefore be offered that this last piece of the *My identity* series is suggesting a globalized world where traditional Tibetan culture is not only mixing with that of the conquering Chinese, but also with the commercial western world. In other words, the accessories of Tibetan Buddhism and a Western welfare society manufactured in China not only refer to the full neuroses of the Tibetans living in the West, but point to the confusion of the West as well. It is clear that Gonkar Gyatso has abandoned the *univoque* roles of his life and is therefore no longer a traditional

Tibetan thangka painter, a committed propagandist of Communist China, a vegetating kitsch painter in Indian exile or a self-conscious contemporary artist in London. He is now a craftsman living in the West, who is enthusing about a Southeast Asian politician fighting against dictatorship, even though non-Buddhist minorities are persecuted in her country. He apparently still manages to preserve his identity even as in his environment traditional objects are made available for everyone involved in global consumer culture. How far this is from Cutting who wished to explore an unknown, isolated world or from the inexperienced Tsering Döndrup who was interested in an unknown outside world.

There is only one object whose position is unchanged in each of the five pictures. This is the paintbox, lying by Tsering's feet in Cutting's photo. This changes into a black box in Gyatso's pictures and always remains in the same place in each of the five compositions. Clare Harris informs her readers that the significance of this box for Gyatso leads us to a Chinese proverb: "Never leave home without your scissors" (See: Harris 2012, 252). The scissors indicate the most important tool of any profession which allow any trader or migrant to settle anywhere. The only constant for Gyatso in this transformation series is his toolkit located within the box but as a result unseen by the viewer. This is in a sense his artistic work. However, a black box also brings to mind the sealed recording equipment used on airplanes, which helps to determine the circumstances and causes of every plane accident. The disaster here lies not only in the division of the Tibetan people but also from the artist's view in the identity of the western and eastern worlds that came into contact with the Tibetans. There is no doubt that Gyatso tries to fix these ever-changing circumstances and reasons through his own life identity, which must be difficult for him. Presumably, this is why he found it important after so many years to create a fifth version of his work. In 2009 Gyatso explained his search for identity:

> "I grew up in Chinese-occupied Tibet, a land where history had almost been erased but I am deeply involved in Chinese culture through my years as student and teacher at university. My hybrid experience has taught me much. In China, I was trained as a calligrapher and landscape painter for four years, from morning to afternoon, I imitated the masters, learning the arts of self-discipline, self-control, meditation and patience in the process. In Dharamsala, through copying the master thangka painters, I was also taught the Tibetan way as regards self-control and self-discipline. But as a Tibetan, my Tibetanness also comes very naturally: it is in my blood and my essence. So it was in accordance with my own cultural tradition that I pursued my artistic work and I have no other choice but to draw on it.
>
> I felt that to use Tibetan cultural elements to address global issues and to participate in global cultural debates would assist my development. I used Tibetan elements but untraditionally which was difficult for my Tibetan audience to understand. At the same time conservative Tibetans and western intellectuals accused me of revisionism. The isolation and levels of incomprehension among different cultures which ensued was the dilemma I faced. I still feel culturally displaced and one solution which has presented itself has been to keep moving in search of an artistic home" (Gyatso 2003, 149–150).

The question then arises as to whether the black box suggesting constancy actually leads to an artistic no- man's-land, apearing in Gyatso's series. The irony is that while a destroyed Tibet is being reconstructed with the assistance of the Chinese government and the vision of traditional Tibet is being sold to both Western and Chinese tourists, Tibetan artists have become contemporary artists in a Western sense and use the symbols referring to traditional Tibet and Buddhism only incidentally. This, however, is clearly sacrilege for many Westerners who desire a traditional Tibet and who ignore the fact that global changes do not leave Tibet untouched. What then is Tibetan identity? Is it the maintenance of the traditional Tibetan way of life under all circumstances with a national consciousness going back to the 7th century? Is it coexistence with the Chinese occupation and transformation into a western treasure (Ch. *Xizang*) for the Chinese People's Democratic Republic? Is it the government in exile in Dharamsala, India? Is it the slow transformation of the Tibetan way of life in India and/or the rapid transformation in Western emigration? Is there anything else left for Tibetans other than the spectacular "western career of Buddhism in eastern costume", or rather, a surprisingly durable Western fantasy-product, the world of Shangrila, which has been realised recently in the Tibetan borderland in Yunnan province, China?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Tibetan sources:

b s T a n p a r a b b r t a n. 2007. *Bod kyi srol rgyun mdzes rtsal las bris 'bur gnyis kyi byung ba mdo tsam brjod pa.* Pe cin.

b r T s o n ' g r u s r a b r g y a s and r D o r j e r i n c h e n. 2001. *Bod kyi ri mo spyi'i rnam gzhag blo gsal 'jug sgo.* Pe cin.

Other sources:

A l l i n g e r E. 2007. Representations of the Twenty-eight Buddhas of Former Aeons. In Bagan. G. Bhattacharya, G.J.R. Mevissen, M.M.S. Sinha (eds), *KALHĀR Studies in Art, Iconography, Architecture and Archaeology of India and Bangladesh. Professor Enamul Haque Felicitation Volume.* New Delhi, 73–80.

C u t t i n g S. C. 1937. A Photograph of Tsering Döndrup. Lhasa. http://tibetanmaterialhistory.wikischolars.columbia.edu/file/view/bob1-3.jpg/100489381/bob1-3.jpg. Access: 10.12.2017.

C u t t i n g S. C. 1947. *The Fire Ox and Other Years.* London.

G o n k a r G y a t s o. 2003. No Man's Land: Real and Imaginary Tibet: The Experience of an Exiled Tibetan Artist. *The Tibet Journal* 28 (1/2, Spring & Summer).

G o n k a r G y a t s o. 2009. Buddha in Modern Times. In *Tibetan Arts in Transition: A Journey through Theatre, Cinema and Painting. Seminars Proceedings.* Rome and Naples.

G o n k a r G y a t s o. 2009. *Gonkar Gyatso, Venice Biennale 2009.* London.

G o n k a r G y a t s o. http://gonkargyatso.com/about-the-artist/artist's-bio. Access 10.10.2017.

H a r r i s C. 1997. Struggling with Shangri-La: The Works of Gongkar Gyatso. In Frank Korom (ed.), *Constructing Tibetan Culture: Contemporary Perspectives.* Montreal.

H a r r i s C. 2012. *The Museum on the Roof of the World*. Chicago and London.

H e n s s M. 2014. *The Cultural Monuments of Tibet*. Prestel, Munich, London, New York.

J a c k s o n D. and J a c k s o n J. 1984. *Tibetan Thangka Painting: Methods and Materials*. Ithaca, New
    York.

J a c k s o n D. 2012. *The Place of Provenance: Regional Styles in Tibetan Painting*. New York.

J a m y a n g   N o r b u. http://www.jamyangnorbu.com/blog/2014/10/27/a-cup-of-tea-and-a-slice-of-art-
    please/. Access 10.10.2017.

L i n r o t h e R. 2004. *Paradise and Plumage: Chinese Connections in Tibetan Arhat Painting*. New York,
    Chicago.

R e i l l y M. 2012. Gonkar Gyatso: "[A] product of occupied-Tibet". In *Gonkar Gyatso: Three Realms*.
    Brisbane.

R e y n o l d s V. and H e l l e r A. 1983. *Catalogue of the Newark Museum Tibetan Collection*. Volume
    I. New Jersey.

R e y n o l d s V. 1999. *From the Sacred Realm: Treasures of Tibetan Art from The Newark Museum*. Prestel,
    Munich, London, New York.

S c o g g i n T. V. 2007. *Making Waves: The Rimo of Curating Contemporary Tibetan Art Through an
    Anthropological Lens*. http://www.asianart.com/exhibitions/waves/rimo.html. Access 10.10.2017.

Author's address:

Béla Kelényi
Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts
Andrássy út 103
1062 Budapest, HUNGARY
e-mail: kelenyi.bela@gmail.com

WE ARE NO MONKS.
NARRATING THE SELF THROUGH
NEW TIBETAN EXILE CINEMA

NATALIA BLOCH

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY IN POZNAŃ

The purpose of this article is to analyse responses given by the young generation of Tibetan 'born refugees' to imaginations of Tibet which exist in global culture. They employ cinema as a medium for narrating about themselves: going beyond the idealized image of Tibetans created both by Western popular culture and the identity politics of Tibetan diaspora elites. This study presents an analysis of visual representations of Tibetanness in the new Tibetan exile cinema which burst on scene in the last decade of the 20th century.

*   *   *

Zadaniem tego artykułu jest przeanalizowanie odpowiedzi, jakich udziela młode pokolenie tybetańskich „urodzonych uchodźców" na istniejące wyobrażenie Tybetu. Wykorzystują oni kino jako medium do opowiadania o sobie, wykraczając poza wyidealizowany obraz Tybetańczyków stworzony zarówno przez zachodnią kulturę popularną, jak i politykę tożsamościową prezentowaną przez elity tybetańskiej diaspory. W niniejszej pracy przedstawiam analizę wizualnych przedstawień tybetańskości w nowym tybetańskim kinie na uchodźstwie, które objawiło się na scenie w ostatniej dekadzie XX wieku.

K e y w o r d s: Tibetans, diaspora, born refugees, Tibetan cinema, identity politics.

INTRODUCTION

Tibet has been mythologized and romanticized in popular 'global' culture (Dodin and Räther 2001, see for example Bishop 1989, McLagan 1997) and it has been cinematography – primarily from Hollywood – that has largely contributed to the creation and spread of the exotic and spiritualized image of the Tibetan Other (Schell 2000). For many years, it was Westerners who made films about Tibetan people culture[1]. These images made Tibetans recognizable, but at the same time idealized them in the global

---

[1] See for example: *Lost Horizon* (1937, based on a James Hilton story), *Golden Child* (1986, a comedy adventure with Eddie Murphy as star), *Little Buddha* (1993, directed by Bernardo Bertolucci), *Seven Years in Tibet* (1997, a blockbuster starring Brad Pitt) and *Kundun* (1997, directed by Martin Scorsese).

imagination: depicted as mystical, inner-oriented, compassionate and peace-loving beings. Donald S. Lopez Jr. (1998) argues that Tibetans – as all of us – have become "the prisoners of Shangri-La"[2], trapped in Western notions of Buddhism that reify Tibetan culture and reduce it to a single religious dimension.

However, it is not just 'the West' that "orientalises" Tibet (Said 1978), constructing it as essentially distinct from itself. Tibetan- diaspora- elites also create their own myths about Tibetans, using stereotypes and expectations of who they are in order to promote their political cause and win international support. In this form of identity politics, which I will argue works as a "refugee identity regime" only one accepted articulation of identity is allowed with Tibetans pictured, as opposed to their Chinese 'Other' counterparts, as nature-loving, peaceful, kind, and religious (Bloch 2011). Such image-making, which skilfully plays on and exploits existing notions of Tibet, has ''invisibilized' certain groups of Tibetans. A case in point being the many young, secular Tibetans from India; a generation already born in exile, whose voices have not been represented in official representations created by both Tibetan- exile- elites and the outside world.

These young Tibetan 'born refugees'[3] have therefore being searching for alternative means of self-expression which would allow them recover their silenced voices. I argue that film – along with music and literature (prose, poetry, and essays) – have provided their voices with such an avenue for expression. A lot has been written on the Western creation of Tibetanness. In this article however I analyse responses given by young Tibetan generation living in exile to the existing imaginations of Tibet in global culture. They employ cinema as a medium for narrating their own self, which goes beyond the idealized image of Tibetans created both by Western popular culture and Tibetan diaspora-elite identity politics. This study presents an analysis of visual representations of Tibetanness in the new Tibetan exile cinema which burst on the scene in the last decade of the 20th century: *We're No Monks. A Struggle for Identity* (2004) by Pema Dhondup, *Dreaming Lhasa* (2005) by Ritu Sarin and Tenzing Sonam, *Tsampa to Pizza* (2006) by Sonam Tseten, *Richard Gere Is My Hero* (2007) by Tashi Wangchuk and Tsultrim Dorjee, and *Seeds* (2008) by Dazel, all have three things in common. Firstly, all were made by a young generation of Tibetans brought up outside Tibet (three of whom studied filmmaking in the United States of America). Among these directors only Sonam Tseten is not a '2nd generation 'refugee' as he came to India at a tender

---

[2]   It was mostly Hilton who contributed to the invention of *Shangri la*, a Western paraphrase of *Shambhala* (Wylie: *Sham bha la*) – a hidden Buddhist kingdom, more spiritual than real. *Shangri la* is a myth that associates Tibet with a land of eternal happiness, peace and spirituality.

[3]   I use this term when referring to Tibetans who are 2nd generation 'refugees', who were already born in exile and therefore are not refugees in a direct sense (as they have never fled any country). However, they 'feel exiled' and intentionally maintain their statelessness by not acquiring Indian citizenship. The refugee status, which they identify with, is an imagined one and as such has been 'inherited' by them from their exiled parents. In other words, they were 'born as refugees' (Bloch 2011).

age and was raised in the diaspora. Secondly, all of them were filmed in India and tell the everyday stories of Tibetan youths who live in exile: a topic entirely ignored by Western artists. And thirdly, they all break with the perfect image of Tibetans, and instead attempt to deal with the real thoughts, desires, doubts and problems of young people. The Tibetans portrayed in these pictures do not go to *gompa*[4] nor say *mantras*[5] every day; instead they play rock music, drink alcohol, pick up Western girls, argue with their parents and discuss the use of violence in their political struggle, without sacrificing their feelings of being very much Tibetan.

Analysis of the films is supported by ethnographic fieldwork which I have been conducting among the Tibetan diaspora in India since 2004. It focuses on young Tibetans born in exile and living in different Tibetan settlements in the states of Karnataka, Orissa, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir. Included also are the cities of New Delhi and Bangalore[6]. Two of the analysed films I had the opportunity to watch during field research included, *Richard Gere Is My Hero*, which I saw at a premiere show in Dharamsala, and where I could observe the very spontaneous reactions of the audience to the scenes they knew from their own lives. *Tsampa to Pizza* was shown to me at its director's home in New Delhi. With the exception of Pema Dhondup – who, though raised in India, lives in the United States – I had the opportunity to personally meet all the directors, while some of the actors became research partners and friends. I still remember to this present day how moved I was when I saw *We're No Monks* for the first time, the film which, in my opinion, initiated new Tibetan exile cinema[7]. Having already been working for some time in a Tibetan world of perfectly polished images, I was really shocked by the frankness and directness with which the filmmakers unveiled the world of young Tibetan exiles that had hitherto been invisible in public discourse.

BEING TRAPPED IN AN IDEALIZED IMAGE: "A STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY"

With reference to non-Tibetans' expectations of Tibetans as being so gentle that they are incapable of venting their anger during street protests, Lobsang Yeshi, a then member of the Central Executive Committee of the Tibetan Youth Congress, concluded that "[n]ot only are the Chinese oppressing us, so are the rest of the world" (following Susan 2008, 36). One of my research partners, a Bangalore-based activist with "Friends of Tibet. India" NGO, expressed this feeling of being suppressed by the outside world's expectations in a similar way:

---

[4] Wylie: *dgon pa* – a Buddhist temple or monastery.
[5] Sanskrit: an invocation to a deity and a kind of a short prayer repeated multiply.
[6] The findings of this research have been published in a book based on my PhD thesis (Bloch 2011).
[7] It was advertised as the "first Indo-Tibetan feature film" as it was made in cooperation with an Indian production company (with a famous Indian actor playing one of the main characters).

"I'm sick of people's expectations. People in the West would like to see us always smiling, with an empathetic heart and peaceful. But these are their imaginations, not the truth. They need to get rid of these images and see the reality. In the depth of my heart – I assure you – this compassion is there. But we have to be very practical and circumstances play an important role. If the circumstances are O.K., then – I'm sure – Tibetans will smile all the time (...). But we are not happy here so who is to laugh? If we feel disappointment, anger".

However, as Paul Christiaan Klieger argues, Tibetan refugees are not merely the passive victims of our (Western) imaginative constructs but they actively and consciously make selective self-representations of their culture (Klieger 1997). I wish to argue that the contemporary image of Tibetans is a product of bilateral idealization: that of romanticized notions of Tibetanness created in the Western world and that of identity politics created by Tibetan- diaspora- elites. Although the latter can be read as the collective agency of a subaltern group, it also works as a regime by classifying certain attitudes and behaviors as 'non-Tibetan', and therefore employing authenticity as an exclusionary category (such as being violent connoting being non-Buddhist and thus not being an 'authentic Tibetan'). This involves the condemning attitude of many Tibetan exile elites towards the 'Westernization'[8] that the Tibetan youth are supposed to be undergoing, although many Tibetan traditions now so celebrated were invented in exile (Bloch 2011, 403–482)[9].

In the film *Tsampa to Pizza* – itself a telling title[10] – there is a scene in which an elder Tibetan tells his few-years- old grandson: "You have to preserve it [the culture and tradition]; otherwise who will do it?" I find this scene representative of the pressure that the community – family, school, government – puts on 'born refugees'(2nd generation) who are expected to be part of a 'living heritage' or an 'open-air museum' of traditional Tibetan culture. The "traditional Tibetan culture" is believed to survive only in exile and such an assumption is a source of cultural 'neo-puritanism' (Nowak 1984). However, as I observe during my fieldwork, many young Tibetans are increasingly tired of this idealized, neo-puritanist image. I argue that there are two main reasons behind that. First of all, young Tibetans, educated in modern schools and living in exile believe that this pacifist and spiritual image has yet to bring any significant political change to the Tibetan cause. They expect their government to be pragmatic and not idealistic. In the monologue opening the film, one of the characters in *We're No Monks* asks a crucial question in this regard and answers it himself: "What has the

---

[8] There is also a fear of "Bollywoodization", but as a result of the separation strategy consequently employed by the Tibetan exile government this impact has become more limited (Bloch 2012).

[9] See for example Huber (1997) for environmentalism. See Calkowski (1997) for performance arts.

[10] *Tsampa* (Wylie: *rtsam pa*) is a roasted barley flour, usually mixed and drank with salted butter tea, with the alcoholic drink *chang,* or simply with water; it can be accompanied by yak cheese or meat. In the process of Tibetan nation-building, *tsampa* is considered to be a 'traditional' Tibetan food as opposed to Chinese rice-eaters (see Shakya 1993).

world given us? Only empty sympathy!" Secondly, the 'born refugees' want to be active participants in global culture and initiators of cultural change. They demand the right to wear jeans, listen to rock music, drink beer and still be considered Tibetans. In other words, they strive for agency in the process of self-identification and they search for a space to create their own articulations of Tibetanness, instead of simply adjusting to the image of a 'good traditional Tibetan'.

However, such articulations have been mostly refused to them. The generation of young, secular Tibetans born in exile is not represented in either popular 'global' culture or the official publications of the Central Tibetan Administration[11]. On websites, in photo albums and in movies it is rare to see young people – wearing baseball caps, leather jackets, hip-hop pants, jeans or Nike trainers. Their broadly smiling parents and grandparents are widely represented – dressed 'traditionally' while carrying a prayer wheel in one hand and a *mala*[12] in the other. If any youths perchance to appear in these visual representations, they are mostly monks or school-uniformed children. The fact that young, secular Tibetans have been erased from mainstream representations proves that they are not considered representative of Tibetan culture. When speaking of Tibetan youths, senior diaspora elites employ either narratives of expectation or critique. In the former, young Tibetans are expected to be "the seedlings of a future Tibet", and it is this pressure that the film *Seeds* refers to in its title. Similarly, when they fail to meet these expectations, they are often condemned, especially by Tibetan educators, such as Tsepak Rigzin, the long-term principal of the Central School for Tibetans in Mundgod settlement (Karnataka state):

> "The drive and interest of the younger generation towards modern rock music and Indian cinema overshadows their interest and love of Tibetan culture and tradition. Complaints of the poor standard of the Tibetan language, a lack of interest in religious and cultural activities, rising cases of indiscipline and the formation of undesirable social habits to name but a few are causing concerns. (...) There is a growing trend among the Tibetan youth of today to look for quick money and luxurious lifestyles" (Rigzin 2004, 276–277).

In order to counteract these negative influences, books have been published which aim to admonish young Tibetans for deviating onto the wrong path'. One such book recounts the story of a young girl, Yungtso, who rather than focusing on her college studies, abandons herself to the nightlife of an Indian city: starting an informal relationship with seductive Nyima. As a result she falls pregnant, is abandoned and finally expelled from college (Khedup 2003). In the introduction to this moralizing story, Tsewang Gyalpo writes:

---

[11] It is the official name used by the Tibetan government in exile since the Indian state has never recognized its authority.
[12] Sanskrit: a Buddhist rosary consisting of 108 beads.

"[The] media and the demonstrative effect of this modern world is taking our youngsters for a ride. Besides the academic syllabus, we need to evoke and cultivate in our children the essentials of our social and moral values, so that a good girl like Yungtso (our generation) do[es] not become confused in the middle [in itself] and degenerate. We cannot afford this at this moment of history (...). I sincerely hope that the story of Yungtso will serve as a rein and a reminder to all those youngsters galloping to the path of degeneration that it is better to come into the fold of our society and serve our common cause" (following Khedup 2003, 4).

BREAKING THOUGH: "A VOYAGE TO TIBET LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN"

Throughout my fieldwork, I was in a position to observe the appearance of young Tibetans who wandered through the narrow streets of McLeod Ganj[13] and Majnu Ka Tila[14] armed with camcorders and experimenting with film-making (spelling). Such characters have been depicted before in films made by young Tibetan exiles. Cases in point being mute Damdul from *We're No Monks* who documents the everyday life of his friends with a small digital camera and Karma from *Dreaming Lhasa* who comes to Dharamsala to make a documentary film about former political prisoners from Tibet. Scenes shot by them have been included in their films, which – along with the 'natural' settings of the Tibetan diaspora in India (settlements, districts, markets) – strengthens the reality of the images. More and more young Tibetans who I came to know during my research graduated in filmmaking from mainly North American universities, taking advantage of scholarships provided to them (especially from the Fulbright Program). Others were self-taught directors and learnt the art of filmmaking with the support of foreign friends.

We're No Monks. A Struggle for Identity, as its title clearly states, is a manifesto of sorts for the young generation of Tibetans brought up in exile. It tells the story of four Tibetan friends in their twenties and thirties from Dharamsala who deny involvement in a series of robberies from a local shop; the investigation of which is led by a thuggish Indian policeman. The four protagonists are definitely not monks and pass their time hanging out, guzzling beer and getting high on marijuana. This monotony is interrupted from time to time by an interstate bus which brings young female tourists. The director portrays his generation accurately such as. Tenzin, the main character, who is a figure that can often be met among Tibetan youths: an unemployed college graduate dreaming of "greener pastures" in the United States. He does everything not to follow in the footsteps of his father – an employee of the Tibetan government. Tsering, also unemployed, is the father of a girl whose mother emigrated to the US where she became involved with another man. The woman's father, however, perceives his

---

[13] The upper part of Dharamsala in the state of Himachal Pradesh, north India. Dharamsala has become the 'capital' of the Tibetan diaspora in India.
[14] The name of the district in the northern part of New Delhi inhabited by Tibetans.

son-in-law to be an irresponsible idler and restricts his contact with the sick daughter. Damdul, the aforementioned self-taught filmmaker, sells bread from the roadside. The fourth protagonist, Pasang, is the only one born in Tibet. He runs a small eatery in McLeod Ganj and takes care of his sister, a former political prisoner who has just fled Tibet. In his spare time Pasang writes a play devoted to the Tibetan cause. He strongly supports the radical methods of political struggle against the Chinese presence in Tibet and condemns the complacency of 'born refugees'. The film poses a question about the possibility of the Tibetan freedom movement turning violent.

The nostalgic *Dreaming Lhasa* was directed by the most famous Tibetan-Indian duo of filmmakers, the couple that is Tenzing Sonam and Ritu Sarin, who started their own production company, White Crane Films. The film tells the story of three young Tibetans in their thirties who belong to three different worlds. Karma who has grown up in the United States is a director working in New York. She comes to Dharamsala to make a documentary feature about former political prisoners. However, the main purpose of her trip to the exiled 'Tibet' in India is a search for identity but also an attempt to escape from a failing relationship to her American boyfriend. One day Karma interviews Dhondup, an enigmatic ex-monk, and a recent arrival from Tibet. The real reason behind his stay in India is to fulfill his dying mother's last wish to deliver a charm box to a long-missing guerilla fighter. Karma falls in love with Dhondup and decides to help him search for the mysterious soldier. They start their journey into the Tibetan diaspora – through the dark streets of Majnu Ka Tila and the sweater sellers' stalls in Jaipur. Also present is Jimmy, Karma's assistant (played by a musician from the JJI Exile Brothers, a Dharamsala-based band very popular among young Tibetans). Jimmy is a typical vagabond of Dharamsala and the permanently unemployed leader of a local rock band who is trying to pick up Karma. The film was publicized as "a voyage to Tibet like you've never seen".

Tsampa to Pizza is a short feature film which was shot in New Delhi and tells the story of Tenzin and Dhondup who have just graduated from a Tibetan school and are admitted to an Indian college to pursue their studies. This is the first time they have lived outside their Tibetan community. However, their interest in education pales into insignificance when compared to their interest in girls, music, fashionable clothes, and sport. They share a room, the rent of which is paid for, by their parents. They are carefree and clueless until they meet a former political prisoner and an Indian Tibet supporter, sparking Tenzin into thinking about the meaning of his life.

Richard Gere is My Hero is a funny yet bold production with a challenging title. It is again a story of four young Tibetans and their daily lives in Mcleod Ganj: hanging around, playing snooker, drinking alcohol, fighting with other Tibetans and trying to pick up female tourists. Nyima, the main character, is a diehard fan of Richard Gere and awaits the arrival of his idol in the town (which is not such an unrealistic dream considering Gere's friendship with the 14th Dalai Lama and his constant support for the

Tibetan cause). Nyima wants to be a famous actor himself but does absolutely nothing to accomplish this. The main plot focuses on the annual drama competition that teams from different Tibetan settlements take part in. Nyima's friends prepare a play – they do not want to lose the competition as they do every year. A beautiful Tibetan girl comes from New Delhi to support the boys in their acting endeavours and problems arise when two of them fall in love with her which gives the film a romantic comedy element.

The film *Seeds* is the first to present a female perspective, as it was directed and produced by a young Tibetan woman, born and raised in India, although then living in Paris. The titular "seeds" are a group of young Tibetans who live in New Delhi. Unlike *Tsampa to Pizza* they are not students but graduates who are trying to find their place in an Indian metropolis, outside their Tibetan community. They mainly work for transnational companies which have outsourced their customer services to the countries of the Global South where labour costs are lower. They live in the Amar Colony, a neighborhood frequently inhabited by young Tibetans and where my research was conducted (two of the actors are my longtime research partners whom I have known from the time when they lived in the Dolanji settlement in the state of Himachal Pradesh). This short black-and-white feature film recounts the story of one day of their life in the spring of 2008, when a demonstration against the upcoming Olympic Games in Beijing and a crackdown on protests in Tibet were taking place in the city. Politics provides a backdrop for the everyday activities of the young Tibetans living in a big city: boys speeding on motorbikes: lifting weights at the gym; passing time on the rooftops of a crowded metropolis taking photos of their tattoos and hairstyles for social media and girls doing makeup in front of the camera as if in front of a mirror. One of the former falls pregnant and her Tibetan boyfriend vanishes.

WE ARE NO MONKS – BUT WHO ARE WE?

What you may ask is the image of the young generation of Tibetans living in exile in India that emerges from these very autobiographical films. Other questions worth posing include what kind of self-representations have they created and what do young Tibetans want to tell us about themselves. First of all, they are not monks and do not want to be perceived as such. What is really striking in these productions is the lack of Buddhist-related- images which are so strongly associated with Tibet in the global imagination: no prayer wheels, no butter lamps, no mantras, no *gompas*, and no monks. Tenzin from *We're No Monks* says: "Praying for all sentient being[s] is outdated". If there are any manifestations of religiosity in all the films, they refer only to the newcomers from Tibet: Dhondup from *Dreaming Lhasa,* believes in the prophecy of the oracle (for which he is roundly ridiculed by Jimmy) and Pasang from *We're No Monks*, carries a *mala* as a matter of course. The critical attitude held by 'born refugees' towards the

way Buddhism is practiced by the older generation has been captured in *We're No Monks* where there is the grotesquely portrayed character of an old woman who each morning walks through the streets of McLeod Ganj with a conspicuous prayer wheel in her hand. However, instead of praying, the woman spreads gossip about others throughout the town. Even the 14th Dalai Lama, an icon of Tibet and a global "spiritual celebrity" (Iyer 2008), is barely referred to and, if he is, then only as an image that in fact veils the real feelings and desires of Tibetans. Tenzin tells an American female tourist whom he picks up: "He [the Dalai Lama] is enlightened. I'm not", as if he wanted to make her see him as a man of flesh and blood. Tenzin Tsundue, a poet and activist among the youthful generation of Tibetans born in exile, speaks in a similar vein:

> "(...) His Holiness' sense of compassion is that of the Buddha. I'm a human being looking for freedom in this world. As a Buddhist, my attempt is to be a better person and not to renounce the world" (following Chaudhury 2008, 33–34).

I have to admit that I myself have been guilty of perpetrating reductionist simplifications. Once I asked the aforementioned activist from the "Friends of Tibet. India" NGO whether in his opinion the fact that Tibetans serve in the Indian army did not directly contradict the Buddhist principle of *ahimsa*[15] and the political concept of non-violence both built on it and promoted by the government in exile. My research partner looked really disappointed and irritated with my question: "When you say this, it seems that all Tibetan boys and girls should be monks and nuns! Only then would everything fit, but we are human beings!" Tsering Namgyal, a Tibetan journalist born in India and now living in Taiwan, the author of one of the first literary self-reflections on the generation of 'born refugees', published in India at the same time when the new Tibetan exile cinema was born, expressed his irritation with the fact that religious identity has completely overshadowed all other marks of Tibetan identification and belonging, such as profession, ethnicity or gender: "Whenever I have been abroad (...) when I said that I was Tibetan, it was a given that I would be asked a question about Buddhism" (Namgyal 2006, 42). Young Tibetans are aware of the exclusionary workings of a "refugee identity regime". One of my research partners, an employee of a call centre in New Delhi and one of the actors in *Seeds*, told me once that his parents "say that I'm a communist because I don't go to *gompa*". The film *Seeds* illustrates well the pressure that is imposed, particularly on young women, to behave properly. In one scene a girl's brother warns her against going out in a miniskirt: "You are embarrassing your community and your family". She fights back: "All girls in the world dress like this. Why not me?"

The young Tibetans portrayed in these analysed films are undoubtedly not renouncing the world. They binge drink, smoke marijuana, chase Western girls, hang around

---

[15] Sanskrit: not causing suffering, non-violence.

on motorbikes, listen to hip-hop and play rock music. Moreover, they dream about emigrating to the 'West'. Tenzin from *We're No Monks* carries a one-dollar banknote in his wallet and wears a T-shirt emblazoned with an American flag. He says: "I must have done something very wrong in a previous life, that I got stuck here [in India]". One of the characters in *Seeds* says: "Whatever [America] is, I am sure, it's much, much better out there than here". In order to obtain a visa to the United States, Jimmy from *Dreaming Lhasa* shaves his head and pretends to be a monk; the success of this highly agentic use of Tibetan's global image was lavishly celebrated in a pub in McLeod Ganj.

Contrary to what supporters of Tibet from Western countries imagine, and against the wishes of exile elites, the daily lives of young Tibetans from India do not encompass a space between home and *gompa*. These are rather marked in settlement-landscapes by such sites as snooker clubs (from time to time shut by camp authorities), football grounds and areas on the outskirts of the settlements where young people congregate on their motorbikes after dark in order to chat and have a drink. In Dharamsala, like in many Indian cities, they gather in pubs and discos. *We're No Monks* opens up with a scene at Shiva Café, a popular spot located above a waterfall, about half-an-hour walk from McLeod Ganj where Tibetans and tourists meet to enjoy music, alcohol and marijuana (the place has a habit of being repeatedly shut by the Indian police). One of the main protagonists in the film says: "My friends and I were enjoying the night as usual at Shiva Café. That is our life and also our world". Commenting on the Tibetan youth enjoying themselves, one Tibetan activist says: "People can't carry pain all the time. The wounds are there and when the times comes the people will rise and they will rise strong" (following Susan 2008, 36). In *Tsampa to Pizza*, Tenzin and Dhondup hang both a poster of Eminem and the national Tibetan flag on the wall of their rented room. For them, as for many young Tibetans among whom I conducted research, entertainment and so called 'Western cultural influences' do not conflict with patriotism. In other words, what the analyzed films attempt to tell us, is that one can listen to hip-hop music and be a Tibetan at the same time, which is something denied by the neo-puritanist-identity politics of the exile elites. It seems that although Tibetan elites are very afraid of 'Westernisation', for many young Tibetans this does not mean the vanishing of Tibetanness because their Tibetanness is more defined in terms of political engagement than cultural 'purity'.

The third motif common to all the films is political engagement as a core characterising the Tibetanness in exile. The characters portrayed in all the films may not be religious and may waste their time at parties, but they cannot escape politics, although one of the protagonists in *We're No Monks* says in despair: "Forget all this bull-shit politics". As one of my research partners, a 'born refugee', says: "When you are a refugee, everything is about politics". This is why, despite fleeing the candle-lit protest organized each year to commemorate the 1959 uprising in Tibet, the four friends from *Richard Gere Is My Hero* engage themselves in a drama competition, preparing a play

about the 'independence versus Middle Way' dilemma[16]. This is why Tenzin from *We're No Monks* decides to go to New Delhi to abduct a Chinese diplomat in order to exchange him for Tibetan political prisoners. This is also why Tenzin from *Tsampa to Pizza* discovers his 'true self' through political awareness when he says to a journalist: "We are born as refugees but we are not gonna die as refugees"; and the film's director adds: "Never give up!". This is why all the friends from *Seeds* – although they risk losing their jobs and being detained which would put them at risk of being refused visas to the United States – decide to take part in a demonstration. This is also why one of the female protagonists in *Seeds* has a nightmare in which she is in the middle of an empty road wearing a wedding-style dress made out of the Tibetan national flag that starts bleeding. In all the films the Tibetan cause is shown as an integral part of the 'born refugees'' everyday life – lived, experienced, felt, and discussed over a bottle of beer. This sense of belonging to the 'cause' makes exiled Tibetanness highly political. The imagined, 'inherited' refugee status seems to be the most significant factor behind Tibetan identity-making in India. Tibetans born and brought up there emphasize their constant consciousness of living with the big 'R' (standing for 'Refugee') written on their foreheads. Being refugees makes them Tibetans (Bloch 2011; see Mountcastle 1997, 177–178; Anand 2000, 275; Yeh 2002, 248).

The politicization of self in exile is related to the question of violence – the fourth motif omnipresent in new Tibetan exile cinema. Violence appears in all the films as a political means vis-à-vis the non-violence policy of the government in exile, as well as the daily violence which occurs – in relations with Indians and other Tibetans – which is present in the life of 'born refugees'. This of course directly contrasts with the pacifist global image of Tibetans which 'invisibilizes' such violence. However, violence seems to be the axis of *We're No Monks*. Its director employed similar means to debate the legitimacy and effectiveness of the non-violence principle in the Tibetan freedom struggle in *Richard Gere Is My Hero* by putting into the mouths of his characters such words as: "If we struggle just for our stomach every day, one day we will die" and "Either you kill or get killed". Domestic violence is shown in the film as resulting from the growing generation gap between the 'born refugees' and their parents who have ceased to be authority figures to their kids because of both political helplessness and low material status. Tenzin, the main character of *We're No Monks*, does not want to be like his father. He says that over the course of his years working for the government in exile he has got nowhere. Once, when he returns home drunk, late at night, his father threatens that: "I can kill him if I want". Tenzin does not remain beholden and says: "I can kill too". In *Seeds,* there is a young Tibetan man who threatens to use violence

---

[16] There is an ongoing dispute in the diaspora whether the Tibetan struggle should aim at full political independence or autonomy within the People's Republic of China; the latter is strongly supported by the 14th Dalai Lama, the government in exile and most elder Tibetan elites.

in order to discipline his sister for whom he feels responsible for as they live together under the same roof in an Indian city. In one scene his friends are playing with a gun on a New Delhi-rooftop. "Who would you shoot first?" – asks one of them and then furnishes the following answer: "For me, the first would be a Chinese".

It seems that for 'born refugees' the idealized image of a peaceful Tibetan underestimates Tibet's cause, as a result weakening the political agency of Tibetans. Tibetans portrayed as unreal creatures obsessed with religion are not taken seriously in the world of *realpolitik* (Anand 2008, 99). Although widely admired, the Dalai Lama does not pose any concrete threat to anyone; therefore his political aspirations are ignored. The protagonist in Pasang's play argues that unless Tibetans are more radical in their actions, "nobody will sympathize or hate us". *We're No Monks* ends with a scene in which Damdul tries on a suicide belt with sticks of dynamite. The screen then darkens and finally sound erupts in the form of an explosion and the nervous chatter of Indian policemen on CB radios. The director thus, returns full circle as the film opens with a scene on the media coverage of a suicide attack on a Chinese diplomat in New Delhi.

The question of violence is, in my opinion, more an issue of effectiveness. Pasang, who urges his friends to employ more radical methods in the political struggle, says: "It is time to finally do something!" and points to the examples of Palestine and Kashmir. Such thoughts were often raised during my fieldwork, although most often in informal talks. Many young 'born refugees' doubt whether the idea of non-violence is a viable and successful strategy in relation to the People's Republic of China, for which it can be read as a sign of weakness. That is why one of the protagonists in *Seeds* urges his friend: "Never mix politics and religion together. It never worked". My research partner, a 30-year old monk from a big Tibetan monastery reconstructed in southern India, says:

> "If the Chinese were smarter, they would manage the Tibetan cause as long as His Holiness is still alive. He is the only one who Tibetans are obliged to. Otherwise, we are savage and we are like Spanish bulls! We can easily kill. In the past we used to carry knives on daily basis. Tibetans were precisely like that".

Meanwhile 'the West' – here represented by a Hollywood actor and supporter of the Tibetan cause, Richard Gere – admonishes the Tibetans:

> "You must maintain that sense of uniqueness and that genuine cultural commitment to nonviolence. If you pick up arms and become like Palestinians, you'll lose your special status" (following Schell 200, 56).

It seems that the 'born refugees' are aware that if they go beyond the framework of the identity politics designed by their elites in response to the expectations of the outside world, they might be denied the right to be perceived as 'real Tibetans' (Yeh 2002). These concerns are reflected in the final scene of Pasang's play: in reaction to the main character's detention after he had cut off the abducted Chinese hostage's hand, the Tibetan protesters enter the stage, carrying a banner which reads: "He is not Tibetan".

CONCLUSIONS

The new Tibetan exile cinema which emerged in the last decade of the 20th century has become a platform for a young generation of Tibetan 'born refugees' who have not previously been represented in either the 'global' imaginations of Tibet (to a great extent shaped by cinematography itself) or in official representations created within diaspora elite- identity politics. As such it offers an insight into alternative, "unofficial" versions of Tibetanness. Film has become a means to recover silenced narratives and a medium to create self-articulations which go beyond the idealized image of Tibetans and their culture.

The analysed films unveil the hitherto invisible world of young, secular Tibetans born and raised in India. Four motifs seem to percolate through these productions. Firstly, there is the reluctance towards reducing Tibetanness to Buddhism. Secondly, there is a resistance against cultural 'neo-puritanism' and a demand for the right to enjoy life and global culture. Thirdly, there is a sense of belonging to the 'cause' which makes political engagement the core of Tibetanness in exile (here being a refugee equates to being Tibetan). And fourthly, there is a rejection of the pacifist global image of Tibetans which ignores the presence of violence in the diaspora, both as a debated political method vis-à-vis the non-violence policy of the government in exile and every-day violence. The analyzed films capture the complexity of the young generation of Tibetan exiles clearly, making people aware that there is no single story of Tibetanness.

Finally, it is worth noting that the directors of all these films have decided to speak openly about topics mostly silenced in external self-representations created by the Tibetan diaspora. I find this to be very courageous as by airing them they have risked accusations of breaking the idealized image of the Tibetan community and therefore harming the Tibetan cause.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A n a n d D. 2000. (Re)imagining Nationalism: Identity and Representation in the Tibetan Diaspora of South Asia. *Contemporary South Asia* 9 (13), 271–287.

A n a n d D. 2008. *Geopolitical Exotica. Tibet in Western Imagination*. Minneapolis, London.

B i s h o p P. 1989. *The Myth of Shangri-La: Tibet, Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape*. Berkley.

B l o c h N. 2011. *Urodzeni uchodźcy. Tożsamość pokolenia młodych Tybetańczyków w Indiach* [Born Refugees: The Identity of the Young Generation of Tibetans in India]. Wrocław.

B l o c h N. 2012. Poza integracją. Separacja jako uchodźcza strategia adaptacji, postkolonialny model społeczeństwa mnogiego i indyjski multikulturalizm [Beyond Integration: Separation as an Exile Adaptation Strategy, Postcolonial Model of the Plural Society and Multiculturalism in India]. In M. Buchowski and J. Schmidt (eds.), *Imigranci: między integracją a izolacją* [Immigrants: Between Isolation and Integration]. Poznań, 171–186.

C a l k o w s k i M. S. 1997. The Tibetan Diaspora and the Politics of Performance. In F.J. Korom (ed.), *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora*. Wien, 51–57.

C h a u d h u r y S. 2008. 'It's Time to Break Rules Both Inside and Outside'. Exclusive Interview with Tenzin Tsundue. *Tehelka* 5 (16). 26.04.2008, 32–35.

D o d i n T. and R ä t h e r H. (eds.). 2001. *Imagining Tibet. Perceptions, Projections, and Fantasies*. Boston.

H u b e r T. 1997. Green Tibetans: A Brief Social History. In F.J. Korom (ed.), *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora*. Wien, 103–119.

I y e r P. 2008. *The Open Road: The Global Journey of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama*. New York.

K h e d u p K. 2003. *Bu-mo Yungtso*. New Delhi.

K l i e g e r P. C. 1997. Shangri-La and Hyperreality: A Collision in Tibetan Refugee Expression. In F.J. Korom (ed.), *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora*. Wien, 59–68.

L o p e z D. S. J r. 1998. *Prisoners of Shangri-La. Tibetan Buddhism and the West*. Chicago, London.

M c L a g a n M. 1997. Mystical Visions in Manhattan: Deploying Culture in the Year of Tibet. In F.J. Korom (ed.), *Tibetan Culture in the Diaspora*. Wien, 70–89.

M o u n t c a s t l e A. 1997. *Tibetans in Exile: The Construction of Global Identities*. New Jersey (unpublished PhD dissertation, UMI).

N a m g y a l T. 2006. *Little Lhasa. Reflections on Exiled Tibet*. Mumbai.

N o w a k M. 1984. *Tibetan Refugees. Youth and the New Generation of Meaning*. New Brunswick.

R i g z i n T. 2004. The Tibetan Schools in the Diaspora. In D. Bernstorff and von Welck H. (eds.), *Exile as Challenge. The Tibetan Diaspora*. New Delhi, 266–278.

S a i d E. W. 1978. *Orientalism*. New York.

S c h e l l O. 2000. *Virtual Tibet. Searching for Shangri-La from the Himalayas to Hollywood*. New York.

S h a k y a T. 1 9 9 3. W h i t h e r t h e T s a m p a E a t e r s ? . *H i m a l* S e p / O c t , 8 – 11.

S u s a n N . 2008. Lobsang Yeshi, Sherab Woeser: 'People can't carry their pain everyday'. *Tehelka* 5 (16). 26.04.2008, 36.

Y e h E. 2002. Will the Real Tibetan Please Stand up? Identity Politics in the Tibetan Diaspora. In P.Ch. Klieger (ed.), *Tibet, Self, and the Tibetan Diaspora: Voices of Difference*. Boston, 229–254.

Films

D a z e l (dir.). 2008. *Seeds*. India-France, 29 min.

P e m a D h o n d u p (dir.). 2004. *We're No Monks. A Struggle for Identity*. India, 129 min.

R i t u S a r i n a n d T e n z i n g S o n a m (dir.). 2005. *Dreaming Lhasa*. India, 90 min.

S o n a m T s e t e n (dir.). 2006. *Tsampa to Pizza*. India, 45 min.

T a s h i W a n g c h u k a n d T s u l t r i m D o r j e e (dir.). 2007. *Richard Gere Is My Hero*. India, 90 min.

Author's address:

Natalia Bloch, Ph. D.
Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
Collegium Historicum
ul. Umultowska 89 D
61-614 Poznań, POLAND
e-mail: nbloch@amu.edu.pl

HOW LADAKHI MUST BE WRITTEN.
POSTULATES REGARDING THE CODIFICATION
OF WRITTEN LADAKHI, ITS DEVELOPMENT
AND EDUCATION

TSERING CHOROL

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY, NEW DELHI, INDIA

This text involves a debate surrounding the language of the Ladakh region of India. The Ladakhi language has long since been written in accordance with classical Tibetan grammar. This paper stresses the need for it to be written in accordance with spoken Ladakhi style. This postulate is drawn from the personal research of the author and other researchers in the field. It does not undermine the importance of the classical Tibetan language, which has had a huge influence on the Buddhist population of Ladakh. The paper seeks to propose that the script be made accessible to all Ladakhis, irrespective of their faith. It also points to the differences between Ladakhi and Tibetan languages, resulting in a proposal that Ladakhis should first be made to read and write in the language they speak and subsequently introduced to the classical style.

*   *   *

Artykuł dotyczy debaty wokół języka Ladakhu w Indiach. Język ladakhijski od dawna zapisywany jest zgodnie z klasyczną gramatyką tybetańską. W niniejszym artykule podkreślono potrzebę jego zapisania zgodnie z mówionym językiem ladakhijskim. Ten postulat wynika z osobistych badań autorki i innych badaczy zagadnienia. Nie podważa się tutaj znaczenia klasycznego języka tybetańskiego, który miał ogromny wpływ na buddyjską ludność Ladakhu. Autorka artykułu proponuje, aby pismo stało się dostępne dla wszystkich Ladakhijczyków, niezależnie od ich wyznania. Wskazuje również na różnice między językami ladakhijskim i tybetańskim. Rezultatem tego jest propozycja, aby Ladakhijczycy najpierw mogli uczyć się czytania i pisania w języku, w którym mówią, a następnie dopiero w klasycznym tybetańskim.

K e y w o r d s: Ladakh, Ladakhi language, identity.

Being the medium through which people communicate their feelings and the cord which connects them with one another, **language** is of utmost significance in human life. It is acquired from the people around us and generally a child learns his/her first words from his/her mother; hence the first language that a person acquires and gains mastery of is also referred to as that person's mother tongue. It is also known that a person who has a strong foundation in his/her first language finds it easier to learn other languages. A simple reason for this lies in the fact that someone who knows

the structure of the first language will easier understand the structure and functioning of the new language.

The Ladakhi and Tibetan languages belong to the Tibeto-Burmese branch of the Sino-Tibetan language group. They are said to have originated from the old Tibetan language also known as Proto Tibetan. Ladakh has a long history of cultural and political relations with Tibet and has looked up to Tibet for centuries especially in terms of its spiritual needs at least until the political situation in Tibet changed in the late 1950s. This has resulted in the classical Tibetan language having had a huge impact on Ladakhi because of its function as a rich Buddhist literature repository. It has preserved for centuries these texts, many of which have disappeared from their original languages of Pali and Sanskrit. Ladakhi has since the beginning been written in accordance with the ancient Tibetan style and grammar. The people of this region have evolved with an understanding that their identity is closely connected to classical Tibetan especially its script. Buddhist texts written in the classical are part and parcel of every Buddhist household's prayer room in Ladakh. Understandable then is how strongly they relate their collective identity with it.

The religious significance attached to it has however deterred people from attempting to write in accordance with their own tongue. Today the position of Ladakhi is what the linguists call 'diglossic.' There is a huge gap in the way people in Ladakh speak and write. This situation has made reading and writing the privilege of a few who have undergone rigorous training in learning the classical Tibetan language and its style of writing. The majority have to content themselves with reading the texts without actually understanding their meaning. The debate surrounding the language issue in Ladakh is a serious one considering the fact that it is seen to be intertwined with religious faith.

The hesitancy on people's part to write Ladakhi has taken strong hold, so much so that for a section of society today it is unacceptable that any changes be made to the classical style. It is looked upon as a grave disregard of classical Tibetan. Those who hold the view that colloquial Ladakhi is a threat to the classical put forward the argument that if people started writing in a simplified style, it would lessen their desire to learn the rich texts available in the classical and exacerbate their neglect. Another argument is that classical Tibetan is the common literary language of the entire Himalayan region and hence this language has huge potential and reach unlike Ladakhi which is spoken by a small population. Within Ladakh many dialects of Ladakhi exist and thus choosing a single language for the entire region would prove a difficult task.

In this regard those who support the idea that Ladakhi should be written according to its own grammar and style argue that if it is difficult for people within Ladakh to understand each other's dialects then how can they be expected to understand a language which remains unspoken anywhere in Ladakh at all. Yet another argument is that the only people who can actually read and write classical Tibetan are those who

have undergone proper training to do so, including religious heads, Buddhist scholars and Tibetan language specialists.

For centuries, it has been the case that even ordinary people, who are only literate in Ladakhi have been reading from scriptures they do not understand. If these texts were in their own language they would be in a position to grasp the meaning of these texts more easily. In addition, it has been argued that discouraging people from writing in their local vernacular not only further removes them from their own roots but also from the profound knowledge which is to be found in their much treasured Classical Tibetan. This deprives the people of Ladakh of vast opportunities that they may avail of in expressing themselves in their own language. In the long run this threatens to put their identity as Ladakhis at risk.

Schools in Ladakh teach the Ladakhi script (writing and reading letters and signs) at primary level but the content of the texts is mostly in the classical Tibetan style and grammar. This makes it difficult for pupils to grasp which language they are actually learning. The content gives the impression of being Ladakhi because of the similarity of lexicon to the local language to an extent but in terms of style and grammar it is largely Tibetan. It seems, however, that the situation is slightly improving, because attempts are being made to bring the written language closer to its spoken, lively variety. Ladakhi and Tibetan share a common historical and cultural heritage and to a certain extent lexicon including the use of honorific terms. However, they differ in their phonology, style and grammar. The case markers in the two languages are different as is the usage of the final particles. Differences are also observable in verb form-usage, plural particles and lexicon as well. On a phonological level, Tibetan is different from Ladakhi as Tibetan tends not to pronounce initial consonant clusters. The end sound/s/ which is present in many dialects of Ladakh, especially in the Balti, Purig, Sham and Leh varieties, is missing in Tibetan. What needs to be mentioned in this context is that although these sounds are more or less missing in the Zanskar and upper Ladakh dialects. Most people of these regions understand the Leh dialect which is generally accepted in Ladakh as the standard Ladakhi. It is used in public speeches, the local station of All India Radio and in plays, modern songs and also local films.

Unlike Ladakhi, modern or colloquial Tibetan is used by Tibetans for both spoken and written purposes and is rich in written literature which is not the case with Ladakhi ,which instead has a rich oral literature. If the colloquial Tibetan of today is compared with the Ladakhi language, it will be found that the average Tibetan youth takes greater pride in his or her language. It is interesting to note that the problem of understanding classical Tibetan language is one that is faced by Tibetans also. Similar to the Ladakhi people, they also cannot understand the classical texts, although born as Tibetans. They have to learn separately, consecutively or simultaneously, of their own language (modern Tibetan) and classical one. Thus, it seems hard to expect

a Ladakhi child to write in the classical style (Tibetan) before being taught to write in his/her own mother tongue.

The language issue has also affected the overall development of generations of Ladakh by negatively impacting on their sense of belonging and identity. It is a known fact that the mother tongue helps children in their overall personal, emotional, social and intellectual development and when not permitted from learning and writing in the mother tongue children are affected on all these fronts. Ladakhis take great pride in their culture, but they do not realize that language is the basis on which their culture stands, and without giving their language its due importance their culture stands a great risk of collapsing sooner rather than later.

A number of short stories, songs and poems can be found written in simple Ladakhi but when it comes to more sophisticated forms of literature such as novels there is a long way to go. The debate surrounding the Ladakhi language again is hugely responsible for this state of affairs.

During his stay in Ladakh, the German scholar and missionary August Hermann Francke worked on the Ladakhi language. He tried experimenting with a simple style of writing which was not acceptable and criticized by many. The story of the epic king Gesar, presented by Ladakhi bards and written by Francke (2000) in a simple Ladakhi dialect is an example of the way literature could progress in Ladakh if there were not so many hurdles surrounding this style of writing. The rich folk literature of this Himalayan region is crying out to be written down and this could be a path new writers of Ladakh could pursue. If they are written in the classical style the whole charm of the original is lost. Therefore it is important to put these into writing for the benefit of present and future generations alike.

It is worth observing that today a lot of Ladakhi Buddhist youth are showing a keen interest in the rich philosophical and logical teachings of Buddhism but to comprehend them they are turning not to classical Tibetan but to English. The readily availability of important texts in English, makes this easier for them. The difficulty in learning classical Tibetan and the lack of knowledge of their own language can be blamed for this. The children and youth of Ladakh today are fast drifting away from their language and the practice of discouraging them from using their own language in written form has only further removed them from developing any interest in preserving either their own spoken language or classical Tibetan. This is a matter of grave concern as Ladakhis have already begun to lose faith in their language. Today in Ladakh it is more likely to see a child speaking fluent Hindi than in Ladakhi language.

The association of Tibetan script with Buddhism seems to have kept the huge Muslim population of Ladakh away from it. As long as the script is seen as sacred people are bound to keep their distance from it. This has harmed both the script and language as their reach is further limited to even smaller sections of society. If written Ladakhi were to become the norm in Ladakh, it is possible that in the future more and more

people might become inclined to learn the script and also classical Tibetan. In this scenario, even the large Muslim community might embrace the language and script as a common heritage of the entire region. This could mean a huge boost to the art and literature of the region, both in Ladakhi and classical Tibetan. Bringing the Tibetan script out of the ambit of religion would greatly benefit both Ladakh and its people.

In regards to learning a language movement from the easier to the difficult is required. For the Ladakhis, learning Ladakhi would, undoubtedly, assist in learning Tibetan. In this regard it would seem a good idea that children in Ladakh in their initial years in school be taught to read and write in their own mother tongue. Once they have mastered the basics of Ladakhi they would be in a better position to learn the structure of the relatively complex classical Tibetan and thus students keen to pursue study of the classical would find it much easier to do so at this stage. A person's mother tongue equates to the foundation stone on which personality is gradually built upon. It is hence in the best interests of society to encourage its people to use their own language and to make it compulsory as the medium of instruction at the primary level of education. Writing the language in accordance with the way a person speaks however, must not be permitted to descend into a state of anarchy where each person writes the way he/she wants. Standardization of language is require. In the case under discussion the Leh dialect is more or less considered to be the standard language of Ladakh and is understood easily by people of all parts of the region.

Many writers in Ladakh have attempted writing in a simple Ladakhi style employing its grammar in the process. Initially, such attempts were met with strong resistance from a section who saw it as a threat to classical Tibetan. People have written poems, stories and even one or two novels in this style in the recent past, and translations of some religious texts have also been undertaken which were met with even stronger resistance.

CONCLUSION

In order to put Ladakh on the global map, more than possessing good weather and a picturesque landscape is needed. Much more important is protecting its culture and language for their own sake, for the sake of Ladakh's unique identity and for the sake of coming generations. It is not enough to take pride in one's culture because with this comes the responsibility of working towards keeping it alive, and saving the language could be a way of achieving this.

Language is a transformable communication tool and a platform for self-expression. It is the property of its speakers and they are entitled to use it for their own benefits. The clearing away of confusion between classical Tibetan, spoken Tibetan and spoken Ladakhi is very important for the present and future of these three languages used in Ladakh.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B u t c h e r A. 2013. Grammatically speaking: Religious authorities and development discourse in Buddhist Ladakh. *Durham Anthropology Journal* 9, 95–109.

F r a n c k e A. H. (1905–1941). 2000. *A Lower Ladakhi Version of the Kesar Saga.* With an introduction by Suniti Kumar Chatterji. Calcutta, reprint ed. Delhi.

H o d g e S. 1990. *An Introduction to Classical Tibetan.* Warminster.

K h a n M. T. 2014. Education in Mother Tongue – A Children's Right. *International Journal of Humanities and Management Sciences* (IJHMS) 2 (4). http://www.isaet.org/images/extraimages/P1214011.pdf. Access: 03.05.2017.

K o s h a l S. 1976. *Ladakhi Phonetic Reader.* CIIL Mysore.

K o s h a l S. 1979. *Ladakhi Grammar.* Delhi.

N a g a S. T. 2012. *Tibetan Language, Literature and Grammar.* LTWA Dharamsala.

Z e i s l e r B. 2005. On the Position of Ladakhi and Balti in the Tibetan Language Family. In J. Bray (ed.), *Ladakh Histories: Local and Regional Perspectives.* Leiden–London.

Z e i s l e r B. 2006. Why Ladakhi must not be written-being part of the Great Tradition: Another kind of global thinking. In A. Saxena and L. Borin (eds), *Lesser-known Languages of South Asia: Status and Policies, Case Studies and Applications of Information Technology.* Berlin, 175–194.

N o o r m o h a m a d i R. 2008. Mother tongue, a necessary step to intellectual development. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics* 12(2), 25–36.

Author's address:

Tsering Chorol
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi, INDIA
Email: tseringladakh2@gmail.com

LIFE ON THE BORDERLAND:
BURYATS IN RUSSIA, MONGOLIA AND CHINA

EWA NOWICKA AND AYUR ZHANAEV

INSTITUTE OF SOCIOLOGY, COLLEGIUM CIVITAS
INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SOCIAL SCIENCES, WARSAW UNIVERSITY

This article[1] discusses the relations and some of the mutual Buryat-attitudes of three countries, namely Russia, Mongolia and China. The mass migrations which took place in the first half of the twentieth century divided state borders and the way these countries political contexts affected their identity and mutual opinions. This article also explores some relational aspects o of Buryats with the rest of Mongols in these countries and the role of Buryats in the development of culture.

*   *   *

Artykuł omawia relacje i wzajemne postawy Buriatów z trzech krajów: Rosji, Mongolii i Chin. Masowa migracja w pierwszej połowie XX wieku podzieliła Buriatów granicami państwowymi. W tekście ukazujemy sposób, w jaki kontekst polityczny tych krajów wpłynął na tożsamość Buriatów i wzajemne opinie. Omawiamy także niektóre aspekty stosunków Buriatów z resztą Mongołów oraz ich rolę w rozwoju kultury.

K e y w o r d s: Buryats, Mongolia, Russia, China, ethnicity, Buryatness, Mongolness

INTRODUCTION

This article is based on fieldwork conducted in 2012, 2013 and 2014 in Buryatia, Aga Buryat Okrug (in Zabaikalski Krai, a constituent unit of the Russian Federation) and the Mongolian territory of Khentii aimag[2]. As Buryat settlements in China were not visited, the data on the Buryats and other Mongols of China were obtained both from our field research but predominantly, from the rich materials gathered by other scholars (Namsaraeva 2013, Nanzatov 2010, Boronoeva 2008, Bulag 1998, Szmydt 2013 and others). During our field work, we were present at some important Buryat festivals including *Altargana* (in 2012 in Aginskoe, Russia; and in 2014 in Dadal, Mongolia)

and *Noch' Yokhora*[3] , during which we had the opportunity to come into contact with Buryats from the three countries gathered to celebrate. It was our intention to examine the way these three different states have conceptualized the border and in doing so have created different images and conceptions of history, ethnicity and a sense of nationhood. It should go without saying that the interdependency of these contacts depends on the political relations between the countries.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The first challenge every researcher faces is how to distinguish "real Buryats" from other Mongolic groups. Until recent times, the territory of modern Transbaikalia bore the name Ara Khalkha – Nothern Khalkha [Tsyrendashiev 2008, Chimitdorzhiev]. Khalkha is the name of a territory of independent outer Mongolia which back in the XVII century extended to the north beyond its modern state border with Russia. The large territories in Buryatia, Irkutsk Oblast and Zabaikalski Krai were within the *aimags* of Tusheetu, Zasagtu and Setsen khans. After the gradual fall of the Mongol Empire in 1644, Khalkha Mongol lands were incorporated into the Qing (Manchu) Empire, which was another alien dynasty that came into being after the Mongol and which controlled China and other territories where once the Yuan state used to. This historical event was also known and remembered by the Buryats in the nineteenth century. Thus, the territory of Siberia was not closed within contemporary boundaries, but was an integral part of the historical and cultural formations of the Asian mainland. After the incorporation of Siberia into the Russian state in the seventeenth century, there began a long process of cutting Siberia off from the rest of Asia, which was not completely achieved. The time period involved in numerous treaties fixing the eastern frontiers of the Russian Empire was a long and painful process changing the ethnic and cultural mosaics of the borderlands. The Mongolic Daguur/Daur people living in the modern Zabaikal region in the seventeenth century left their lands for contemporary North China territories. The Old Barga Mongol tribes, which moved from the Barguzin/ Bargazhan valley on the Eastern shore of Baikal to the modern Hulunbuir steppes followed suit. At the same time, the Khori, modern Selenge Buryats left Inner and Outer Mongolia to settle in Transbaikalia. It is fair to assume that the migrations within and beyond current ethnic Buryatia[4] were even more numerous back in that period.

---

[3] *Noch' Yokhora* means Yokhor Night. Yokhor is the circle dance of Buryats.
[4] This term is generally used by modern Buryat scholars to emphasize the fact that Buryat people live not only in the Republic of Buryatia, but also in two other districts: Buryat Ust-Orda Okrug, located to the west of Lake Baikal in the Irkutskaya Oblast' and the Buryat Aga Okrug to the southeast of Chita in the Zabaikalski Krai on the Russian-Mongolian-Chinese border. In addition, the term also encompasses the Buryat areas off any autonomy, in Irkutskaya Oblast' and Zabaikalski Krai.

After the incorporation of Northern Mongolian territories into the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century, the population living there migrated soon afterwards to territories cut off[5] from the rest of the Mongol lands. They then formed the Buryat Nation. It is quite problematic to ascertain to what degree the "Buryat" groups had been integrated into other Mongol groups before the Russian colonization.

This article predominantly wishes to examine the results of migrations that occurred later at the beginning of the twentieth century. The policies of the newborn Soviet state triggered gradual mass migrations throughout the former Russian Empire, including the Buryats. We argue that after two centuries of common experience in the Russian state, the differing groups of Buryats developed a feeling of national solidarity that they kept to different degrees throughout the twentieth century. Furthermore, we wish to present the memories, narrations and opinions of Buryats from the three countries. It should be noted that the state borderland significantly influenced the differences of these narrations. Moreover, we wish to extend our research to include the relations which exist with other Mongolic groups in Mongolia and China.

BURYATS FROM MONGOLIA

The Buryats in Mongolia and Shenekheen Buryats in China are the descendants of Russia migrants which followed the collapse of the Russian Empire in 1918–1920 and which lasted until the end of 1930s when the Mongolian-Russian border was completely closed. According to the contemporary narrations of Buryats from Russia, the migrants escaped the Soviet projects of collectivization and land policy to save their cattle, belongings and lives. We have even heard the opinion mooted that the best and richest people of the Buryat nation escaped during these years, though we noted that the migrants were composed of both rich and those considered poor.

It is not known what percentage of the Buryat population escaped from Russia to Mongolia – numbers vary from 35,000–60,000 refugees in Mongolia. In 1897, the Buryat population stood at c 298 050 while in 1926 it had dropped to 238 100 – a differential of 60 000 people which would coincide with the approximate number of Buryats who migrated to Mongolia[6]. 32.5% percent of Aga Buryats migrated to Mongolia in the period between 1908 and 1916 (Boronoeva, after Szmydt 2013, 152). The proportion of migrants in relation to the total population was indeed very high. In Kizhinga district, we were told that the local Buddhist leader, Lubsan–Sandan Tsydenov, advised Buryats to stay on their grasslands and refrain from migrations and had it not been for this then the population decrease would have been even much higher. People often found that

[5] However, it is known that migrations did not stop after the establishment of the Qing and Russian borders.
[6] (Turin 2010).

the neighbours they had met and talked to the day before, left without warning the following day leaving their houses and property in their wake. However, what should also be borne in mind here is the relatively high mobility of ancient Buryat Nomads.

Memories of the Buryats' kin who remained in Russia are ones of ambivalence and we were frequently told of stories of people who would be afraid to confess of having relatives who migrated to Mongolia. In the seventies, one of our informants who was a child at that time remembered how her father would bury the letters of relatives from Mongolia afraid of the repression which might ensue. However, more frequently, we heard about the mutual visits and quite open contacts which took place between them. It is likely that these contacts depended much on the dynamics of Russian-Mongolian state relations. In the Soviet period Mongolia was commonly referred to as "the sixteenth Soviet Republic". Today, many of the Buryats we talked to were aware of having Buryat relatives in Mongolia, some of whom they used to pay visits to. It would be true to state that they do not know much about them and perceive them as quite distant since the migrations took place about one hundred years ago. Curiously, they are not very eager to seek them out and renew contact – for them they became Mongols and so turns the wheels of history.

During our visit of the Buryat settlements in Mongolia, Ayur (one of the authors) was very frequently asked for his clan name[7] and his place of origin. The inhabitants would seek out areas of commonality and would continue asking whether Ayur knew this or that family. Overall, we had the strong impression that the Buryats from Mongolia missed their relatives in Russia more so than their Russian brethren did their Mongolian. A fifty-five year- old man informed us that he had visited one of his kin in Yaruuna (the Yeravninski district of Buryatia) and Ulan-Ude a number of times, but on his last visit while making his way from Moscow, he was not picked up at the train-station, although promised. He complained that the ties of Buryats in Mongolia and Russia were waning with time and the death of those who remembered them. When old men die, he told us, there will be nobody who will know and maintain the kinship.

The history of the Buryats after migrating to Mongolia at the beginning of the twentieth century turned out to be a traumatic one that has left deep scars on their identity. In 1924, Bogd Khaanate became independent from the Qing Empire and the new socialist state of the Mongolian People's Republic was born. Initially, the ethnically close Buryats were not obstructed and were even encouraged to take up Mongolian citizenship and they actively participated in the political life of Mongolia (see more: Nanzatov 2010, 94). However, the enormous wave of purges which took place in the Soviet Union in 1934–1941 also affected Mongolia, where thousands of Buddhist clergy, aristocrats, "Japanese spies" and "traitors" were persecuted, including the recently migrated Buryats. The exact number of fatalities is unavailable, but

---

[7]   Surprisingly, most of the local Buryats could remember their *obogs* (clan names) and use them to construct ties of solidarity, while in Buryatia they are either forgotten or used only for conducting ancestral rituals.

would be very large. Uradyn Bulag reported that in Khentii and Dornod aimag alone about 5 368 Buryats were killed. Large numbers of Buryats were exterminated in other aimag too, but exact figures are unavailable (Bulag 1998, 85)with different figures ranging from 7–10 000 being bandied around. In the village of Dadal, with a population of 2 617 (National Statistics 2010), we visited a Buddhist complex with stupas and praying wheels containing the names of more than 600 men. This was reported to be 90 percent of the male population of Dadal at that time. According to recorded memories, many Buryats afraid of being killed concealed their origin and dialect and began declaring themselves Khalkha. In addition, there were those who declared that as children they had lost their parents and thus their origin remained unknown.

It might seem that the great sufferings the Buryats in Mongolia had to endure would have created some form of antagonism between the Khalkhas and the Buryats. Indeed, it did not go without bloody traces, but we had the impression that the frightful facts are downplayed, at least in conversations with us. The criminals were referred to a *nogoon malgaitai* (those with green hats)[8], and this certainly does not contribute to the maintenance of harmonious relationships within the nation. It is the USSR and Stalin who are blamed for this catastrophe rather than their own state. It must be remembered that the Khalkhas too also suffered much during that time (Bulag 1998,89). The memory of the purges is also suppressed for cultural reasons because of its painfulness for those living here and now. In karmic terms it is also considered an act of purification to atone for the previous sins that were committed on a national level.

What is even more striking is that some Buryats described their migration to Mongolia as a kind of "happy" escape from the destiny that would have faced them had they stayed in Russia. In addition to the Stalinist purges which occurred all over the USSR and which also touched the Buryats, their Mongolian kin watched with horror how rapidly their kin on the other side of the border lost their language and culture – all the time aware that if they had stayed put a similar misfortune would have happened to them. This is in sharp contrast to the life they have in Mongolia, where their culture is protected by the state as part of the Mongol people's heritage. They also think that they live in a much better "democratic" and financial environment, while "those from the North" – their kin in Russia – lack these opportunities and possibilities. This has resulted in the emergence of a great patriotism in the Mongolian state for those who contributed, participated and even gave their lives for its existence.

In addition, the dialect and the traditional (or rather defined as "traditional") culture of the Buryats in Mongolia was also damaged. As a result of the political suspicion of the Buryats and an ideological striving to be a "real Mongol" (*jinhin* Mongol) – that is Khalkha Mongol – the Mongolian Buryats essentially lost the dialectal features of the Buryat Mongol language. In Dadal, there are no lessons conducted of the Buryat

---

[8] See more Bulag (1998) about the debates among the intelligentsia and politicians on the *ethnical* character of the purges in Mongolia.

language at schools. Local activists have started to teach children the Buryat dialect mainly to prepare them for contests held during the "Altargana" festival.

Teachers readily admit that children's tongues are not smooth and flexible anymore in a way required in the Buryat language. The same holds in regards to traditional dress, which, as aforementioned, was almost totally abandoned during the 1990s. In order to organize the first edition of the "Altargana" festival they would search the old garments and dresses of their elders in an attempt to reconstruct them from scratch but the results often lacked precision. One woman explained this situation: "We here are assimilated with Mongols, and you there with Russians". Generally, despite their comparatively better off position in Mongolia, the Buryats are still worried quite a lot about the state of their culture. The younger generation of Mongolian Buryats are extremely active and productive in terms of restoring their traditional culture and dialect. They have organized a Buryat collective "Amin Toonto", shooting films, clips and establishing webpages, FB communities and blogs. The internet and not their physical proximity serves as the key channel of cooperation between the Buryats in Mongolia and their kin in Russia and these kinship ties mostly involve economic and cultural exchanges.

The Buryats are well aware that in addition to being a part of Mongolia and Mongolian culture, they have another motherland in Buryatia[9]. The culture of Buryatia, especially that of Soviet times, still provides them with cultural symbols and tenets The songs from that period are widely known in Mongolia and not only among the Buryats. They are considered to be folk songs (Gamnaarai, Toonto and nyutag to name but a few). The circle dance *Yokhor* which is a classic example of Hobsbawmian "invented tradition", was promoted as the national dance of the Buryats in Soviet times and is considered a central mark of their identity. The same situation arises with the Buryat language, when they try to imitate the "proper" Buryat pronunciation altering the -s- sound to the distinctive Buryat -h- even in positions where it is not required.

At the same time, they are more adept at constructing lexically and syntactically complex sentences in Buryat language since on a structural level they still operate within the native language, even though officially they are expected to operate with the structures of the Mongolian language. The Buryats from Russia, in this context, feel they are the worst off because even though they are capable of distinguishing the differences between the strong Khalkha accent in the speech of the Mongolian Buryats, they admit that the shift from Buryat to Russian is irreversible in their case. We even heard that old people in Buryatia maintain a stereotype that the Mongolian Buryats speak pure Buryat language because their parents forced them to speak it at home, though our research has proved that this was not entirely the case. In conversations with Buryats from Russia who are currently living in Mongolia, we were informed that the local Buryats and those in China had lost none of their abilities to run businesses in contrast to the

---

[9] Their Buriat identity is increasingly recognized as part of their Mongol affiliation [Bulag], while it may look different among the Buriats from Russia, although it seems to be a recent trend.

Buryats in Russia who had lost it during Soviet acculturation. The former are said to be rich in cattle, cultivated land and often run a business in a village or in Ulaanbaatar.

The general impression was that there is a great gap between different versions of Buryatness, formed during the twentieth century, in completely different political, cultural and ethnic environments; various kinds of Buryatness maintains cohesion merely on the level of elementary symbols. Together with a rapid loss of the language in ethnic Buryatia and with the cultural transformations being experienced by the Buryats in Mongolia, the gap seems to be enlarging. Symptomatic of this state of affairs are the differing attitudes held by both – the Buryats from Mongolia think of their kin in the North as strongly russified while those in Russia simply refer to the Mongolian Buryats as Mongols. This appears to be an irrevocable gulf to bridge.

THE ROLE OF MONGOLIA IN THE CULTURE OF BURYATS

Surprisingly, from the very beginning, an integral part of the "Mongol world" was anti-Pan-Mongolism. The sovereignty which Mongolia gained through enormous efforts at the beginning of the twentieth century, was more important than saving an 'All-Mongol world', which continued to be part of China (Inner Mongolia) and Russia (Buryatia)[10]. In this intricate political game, Mongolia thought it wise to employ a strategy of not antagonizing its two neighboring powers. Naturally, Mongolia turned a deaf ear to the Pan-Mongolist proclamations emanating from Buryat-Mongolia and Inner Mongolia, as such a union perhaps seemed mythical and dangerous and could have led to the destruction of all three (Varnavskii 2003). Mongolia did not want to come to the rescue of other Mongol lands in China and Russia and justified its stance by declaring that Mongolia was working on its own state independence and this aim took precedence. This policy was most clearly seen in respect of the Buryats in contemporary Russia. Though the Mongolian Intelligentsia expressed sentiment and lament over the state of Buryat-Mongol culture and language in Russia, no political interventions could be expected from it. Russia, as an economic and political partner, was more important than the cultural matters of the Buryats. Mongols view the Buryats from Mongolia and Russia differently. Those from Mongolia are counted as their own Mongol community and are not attributed with a separate nationality. Those in Russia, on the other hand, are considered to have been russified and thus an alien group. The culture of Buryats itself is seen as a fusion of Mongol and Russia; the symbols of Buryatness include wooden houses, hay and bread with sour cream. In contrast to the sedentary and agriculture related symbols of Buryats in Mongolia, those, in Russia, tend to be associated with felt houses, steppes and lost nomadism[11].

[10] Here also should be included other regions like Sinjan and Kalmukia.
[11] We do not dwelve into deeper consideration on this very topic as it is beyond the confines of this paper.

We wish to now turn to the expectations and hopes that the Buryats from Russia have in relation to Mongolia. Perhaps we should begin with the great envy harboured by the Buryat Intelligentsia (and simply people too) and what they feel about the independence of Mongolia. Mongolia is what Buryatia could have become: "It is nice in Mongolia – everything is ... is in Buryat!" a young Buryat girl said. Indeed, the highly developed Mass Media, the cinema industry, education, governmental policy and structure – all employ a language, which remind them of their native Buryat. The terms that appear in the language to reflect this new phenomena of the attitudes to Mongolia is largely patterned on the constant Khalkha-Mongol connotations:

> "In general, the closer we are to the state language of Mongolia which TV programmes, films, maga-zines, newspapers and web pages are conducted through , the more we have the opportunity to use our own language. The language is a living entity when used and not simply learned"

writes 'Erzhena' on an internet forum (vk.com). Mongolian pop-culture has had a major influence on the Buryat. A Buryat singer with whom we talked in Aga, said that while composing Buryat songs she felt impacted on greatly by what she had learned in Ulaanbaatar. Such an influence is viewed very positively in artistic circles. Similarly, contemporary Mongolian slices of such genres such as Rap and others are actively adopted by the Buryats. Here is where tradition is being combined with the modern which in Russia has a very different configuration.

However, this has not always been the case. Some decades ago when Mongolia was still considered a backward poor country, Buryats were advantaged by the fact that they knew Russian – thus making them more mobile and competitive on the job market. The restrained relations had their roots in the deep trauma arising for being persecuted for Pan-Mongolism during the Stalinist purges along with the general Soviet policy of eliminating the Mongolness from the Buryats. The soviet ethnographers working in Stalinist times "searched" and "found" other "substrata" in the "ethnogenesis" of Buryat ethnicity. This resulted in the elimination of the word "Mongol" from the name "Buryat-Mongol ASSR", which simply became Buryat ASSR in 1958 and the Buryat-Mongols became plain Buryats (see more: Bulag 1998).

The recent economic changes and the general euphoria felt in Mongolia arising from economic growth, which in 2011 was the highest in the world (17 %) as a result of the development of the mine industry (in contrary to the economic stagnation in Russia), changed the image of Mongolia's values among Buryats positively. Ulaanbaatar became a modern city for the Buryats, where people flocked for shopping tours and entertainment. Some Buryats held out real hopes on Mongolia becoming a strong country with a capacity to protect the interests of Mongol peoples and culture in the world, including the Buryat. According to one of our informants:

> "It was a call to all Mongols to return to Mongolia and start work for the good of Mongolia. They even had a marketing campaign. In contrast however, we have not heard that there was any govern-

ment support. The President of Mongolia announced this [for Buryats to come and live in Mongolia – E.N., A.Zh.] two years ago".

This alleged Mongolian announcement was expressed in the following sentence: "We have the land, river, oil and we cannot only have a two million population. Come to us!" (2012, 721001). These kind of opinions (represented by the citation above) seem to be exaggerated, and largely illusory, but the Mongols who in 2014 had many contacts no doubt took for granted the ethnical or cultural proximity of the Buryat and Mongolian population of Mongolia. In 1993 and 1994 when Ewa Nowicka (the author) was conducting research in Buryatia, respondents spoke of Mongols as their closest relatives, pointing out various aspects of similarity (see more: Nowicka and Wyszynski 1996). Buryats are competing with the Khalkha Mongols in terms of their ancestral, territorial, as well as symbolic affiliation.

Such disputes can be seen, for example, on issues of Genghis Khan's ancestry and burial place. The birthplace of the great Khan was officially discovered in Khentii Aimag in Mongolia. However, right on the other side of the border in the Aga Okrug, local people showed us two other possible birth sites of Genghis Khan in the localities of Budalan and Kunkur. At the same time, we were told about other possible burial places of the Khan on the bottom of the "Buryat part" of the Onon River. Despite these disputes, Buryats admit their common roots and cultural and linguistic similarities:

> "The Mongols [after the collapse of Genghis Khan's empire – E.N., A.Zh.] were divided. Those living in Ulaanbaatar were called Mongols [and they were] the same as the Buryats. Someone said «it is just such a dialect» [Buryat]. [There is a similar] difference between the Mongolian peoples on a linguistic level compared to the differences between the Slav nations: <<Russians can understand Ukrainians and Ukrainians can understand Poles>>. Such is the language – one can understand a lot. Our Buryats participated in the war expeditions of Genghis Khan" (13, 801,013).

Participation in the history of the Mongol Empire raises the prestige of their own ethnic group and at the same time points to their historical communality with the Mongol world.

BURYATS FROM CHINA

In the 1990s., after some thaw in Russian-Chinese relations, the Buryats from China suddenly appeared in the Russian public life. Buryats from Russia found out that Chinese Buryats seemed – as some researchers have said – "living ancestors", they were speaking a very "authentic" form of the Buryat language. Undoubtedly, "They spoke as my grandmother", wrote in a classic Mongol script abolished in Russia and Mongolia in communist times. They also wear and sew their own traditional Buryat clothes and keep traditional forms of nomadic/semi-nomadic pastoralism. The most important traditional singers of song are all from Shenekheen – Badma-Khanda, Sesegmaa, Dashimaa

as well as Butidee Dondog, Gandig and many others. Buryat singers in China did not change the traditional way of singing, which in Russia was much transformed by academic canons. The Shenekheen Buryats have produced a large number of items that have become symbols of authentic Buryat culture. These include Shenekheen buuza dumplings and other dishes in Buryat cuisine. Shenekheen degel, the Buryat dress, is also made by them. This was how Buryats from China (who are actually few in number 8–10 000) have impacted enormously on the cultural life of Buryatia in Russia. We can also confirm that the Shenekheen Buryats still rear traditional Buryat breeds of cow, sheep, horse, goat and even camel, which all are treated as purged and deemed as "not to rent" to other herds in ethnic Buryatia (in order to keep the purity of the races).

Naturally, many intellectuals are puzzled as to how a small community of Buryats managed to keep traditional Buryat culture so strong, while the main Buryat community almost faced extinction. Interestingly, the Shenekheen Buryats state that the reasons for this is that in comparison to the Buryats from Russia and Mongolia they had a comparatively peaceful life in China through managing to escape the traumatic collectivization, Stalinist purges, World War II losses and did not have to endure the strong assimilative policies of the USSR. However the life of Shenekheen Buryats in China was not as peaceful as many of the Buryat intelligentsia tend to present it. Mass migrations to China started from 1918 and continued until 1932 mainly from the areas of Aga Buryats, and as a consequence of the social and political changes in Russia. The lands they moved to were not completely unfamiliar to them as they were near the Russian border, where they used to have temporary pasture lands. They were also familiar with the Barga Mongols (who lived in China since Qing Dynasty), whom they thought of as being close kin.

The destiny of the Buryats lay in the hands of the great Powers including Russia, Japan and China. Soon the border became much more militarized and in 1931 a Japanese puppet state – Manchukuo- on the territory of North-East China was formed. The Buryats were incorporated into the military troops and administration of the new born state. A Buryat who had migrated from Aga – Urzhin Garmaev- was even promoted to the rank of General of the Manchukuo Army. During Japanese-Soviet/ Mongolian conflicts, Buryats and Mongols from the three countries were faced with a situation where they had to kill each other.

In 1945, before the Soviets entered Manchuria, half of all Shenekheen Buryats migrated to the Shilin-gol aimag fearing Soviet aggression, which was indeed perpetrated on those who stayed in Shenekheen. Buryat lamas and lay people were transported back to USSR work camps and those who migrated to Shilin-gol and formed partisan troops on the side of the Kuomintang during the civil war in China, were exterminated. Those who survived migrated westwards to the Kukunor region. In 1956, they were moved back to the Shenekheen by Chinese authorities and in 1957 obtained Chinese citizenship (Hureelbaatar, after: Szmydt 2013, 90). The Cultural Revolution left its scars on

them also. They had almost no contact with their kin in the north, especially from the sixties, because of frozen Sino-Soviet relations and the threat of military confrontation. In the 1990s, the Buryats on both sides of the border did not know that much about each other. The first scholars going there, told us that they had no idea what kind of Buryats to expect. Despite their turbulent history in China, scholars think that it was diaspora consciousness that allowed them to keep their traditional culture and language relatively intact. They moved there with intentions of returning soon to their homeland and thus the first generations did not even learn the Chinese language.

In 1947, Shenekheen Buryats numbered about 7 000, and today there are about 10 000 (these numbers are approximate numbers for the Buryats in China and Mongolia). They do not have the official status of the Buryat minority, but are considered to be part of the Mongol minority. In the first decades after the fall of the Soviet-Union, many Shekheen Buryats moved to their Buryatia homeland. In 1993, about 300 Shenekheen Buryats moved to different regions of ethnic Buryatia. In contrast to the Mongolian Buryats, the Buryats from China strived more to migrate to Russia, but due to the poor legal basis of their repatriation and the recent economic boom in China, their desire to migrate has waned. As Sayana Namsaraeva, a researcher of Mongolic borderland communities, expressed during a conference entitled "Boundaries...", young Shenekheen Buryats feel more comfortable and attracted to living in China now than in contemporary Russia.

The Buryats are not very familiar with the rest of the Inner Mongols. We met a woman, who had undertaken a pilgrimage to Inner Mongolian monasteries and told us that the Mongols living there were all Buryats and spoke an almost pure form of the Buryat language. It happens very often that Buryats mistake Shenekheen Buryats for the Inner Mongols, who consist of several Mongol ethnic groups (Khorchin, Chakhar, Ordos and others), totaling more than the population of the independent Mongolia. Among Buryat elites, Inner Mongolia is gaining an increasing popularity because – in Buryats' eyes – is an example how minority groups in China can maintain their culture relatively intact.

CONCLUSION

The Buryats in Russia perceive their kin on the other side of the border as those who have managed to keep their traditional culture, lifestyle and mentality alive, while those in China and Mongolia seek their roots and relatives in the North. The Buryats from Russia consider those in China and Mongolia to be migrants, but interestingly, the Buryats from those countries feel themselves to be at home due to the fact that myths and recent history have no borders and the cultural background they found in the South is not so alien to them.

The Buryats in the three countries have different ideas in regards to their ethnicity and cultural development. While in Russia, they are treated (and tend to treat themselves) as a separate nation from Mongols, in Mongolia and China their Mongolness is a central element of their identity. Moreover, although in Mongolia they and other Mongolic groups are viewed as inferior to the true Mongols – the Khalkhas, in China, their situation differs. Internally diverse groups of Inner Mongols seem to be more tolerant to different variants of this Mongolness, of which Buryatness is a part.

As has been shown above, the relations between the groups used to be dependent on the policies of the great powers, which in different periods tolerated or did not tolerate them. It will be interesting to know in future the way these relations are going to be shaped. As mentioned in the introduction, this article is only an outline of the relations of Buryats to other Mongols living on different sides of the border. This is, of course, a work in progress, and only a part of what could, and, hopefully, will be realized in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B o r o n o e v a D. Ts. 2008. Buryaty Mongolii: sotsialnaya pamyat' i identichnost'. *Vlast'* 8. Moscow, 74–78.
B u l a g U. 1998. *Nationalism and Hybridity in Mongolia*. Oxford.
N a m s a r a y e v a S. B. 2013. *Life on the divide: The Buriad people and the world's longest border*. http://www.researchgate.net/publication/265365358_Life_on_the_divide_The_Buriad_people_and_the_world%27s_longest_border. Access 29.08.2015.
N a n z a t o v B. Z. 2010. Mongolskie Buryaty: diaspora v situatsii vyzova. *Transgranichnye migratsii v prostranstvie mongolskogo mira: istoria I sovremennost'*. Ulan-Ude, 83–110.
N a t i o n a l S t a t i s t i c s O f f i c e o f M o n g o l i a. 2010. *Population and Housing Census of Mongolia*. http://www.en.nso.mn/content/109. Access 10.11.2015.
N o w i c k a E. and W y s z y ń s k i R. 1996. *Lamowie i sekretarze. Poziomy więzi społecznej we współczesnej Buriacji*. Warszawa.
S z m y d t Z. 2013. *"Modern Nomads" Antropologicheskie ocherki sovremennykh buryatskikh migratsii v Rossii*. Irkutsk.
T u r i n A. M. 2010. *Datirovanie Buriatov*. http://new.chronologia.org/volume10/turin_burjaty.php. Access: 10.11.2015.
V a r n a v s k i i P. K., D y r k h e e v a G. A., S k r y n n i k o v a T. D. 2003. *Buriatskaja etnichnost' v kontekste sociokul'turnoy modernizatsii (konec XIX – pervaya tret' XX vekov)*. http://mion.isu.ru/filearchive/mion_publcations/buryat/. Access 21.08.2015.

Authors' addresses:

Prof. Ewa Nowicka
Institute of Sociology
Collegium Civitas
Pałac Kultury i Nauki, Plac Defilad 1
00-901 Warszawa, POLAND
e-mail: ewanowickarusek@gmail.com

Ayur Zhanaev, Ph.D candidate
Institute of Applied Social Sciences
Warsaw University
Nowy Świat 69
00-927 Warszawa, POLAND
e-mail: ayur_zhanaev@mail.ru

CULTURAL ASPECTS OF DEMOCRATIZATION
IN MONGOLIA
THE ETHICAL PERSPECTIVE

OYUNGEREL TANGAD

IINSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY
POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, WARSAW

Mongolia is often regarded as a young democratic state that has successfully undergone the process of transformation from communism to democracy. However, a cultural anthropological analysis of Mongolian political life shows the potential differences between the ideas organizing social life in Mongolia and those known in advanced democratic societies. This article[1] traces some cultural peculiarities that have impacted on the political situation of contemporary Mongolia. Special attention has been devoted to the concept of *yos*, which is regarded as a relevant aspect of morality in Mongolian traditional culture and is still important in understanding behavioral motives of contemporary Mongols. The rules of *yos* contain a set of proper and improper behavioral criteria towards family members and friendship networks as well as providing a model for proper relations to the state. The concept of collective personhood in the Mongolian cultural way of thinking means a range of social consequences incapable of being observed through analyzes involving individualistic personhood-based methodology.

*   *   *

Mongolia jest często uważana za młode, demokratyczne państwo, które pomyślnie przeszło proces transformacji z komunizmu do demokracji. Jednak, analizy mongolskiego życia politycznego z perspektywy antropologii kulturowej pokazują potencjalną różnicę między ideami organizującymi życie społeczne w Mongolii a tymi, które są znane w społeczeństwach z zaawansowanymi demokracjami. Artykuł ukazuje pewne osobliwości kulturowe, które mają wpływ na sytuację polityczną współczesnej Mongolii. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono koncepcji *yos*, która jest uważana za istotny aspekt moralności w tradycyjnej mongolskiej kulturze i nadal pełni ważną rolę w zrozumieniu motywów behawioralnych współczesnych Mongołów. Zasady *yos* zawierają zestaw właściwych i niewłaściwych kryteriów zachowania wobec członków rodziny i sieci przyjaźni, a także model prawidłowego stosunku do państwa. Koncepcja kolektywnej osobowości w mongolskim kulturowym myśleniu oznacza szereg społecznych konsekwencji, których nie można dostrzec w analizach z indywidualistyczną metodologią opartą na osobowości.

K e y w o r d s: Mongolia, democracy, election, ethic, morality, *yos*.

As a result of democratic movements in 1990, Mongolia, after almost 70 years of being under communism, started to govern itself independently without interference from its large neighbors: Russia or China. In 1992, a new constitution was adopted and Mongolia became a parliamentary republic. The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party (MPRP), the sole party in Mongolia during the communist period, recognized the legality of other parties in order to establish a multiparty political system. To date, about 20 parties have been registered in Mongolia but political life in the country is focused around two movements: *khuv'sgalt namynkhan* – those who were affiliated to the post-communist MPRP, modified after the fall of communism, and *ardchila-lynkhan* – connected to new movements established by the initiators of the democratic revolution in 1990. MPRP and Democratic Party (DP) have ruled the country over the last 20 years being either in coalition or by themselves. However, the most significant role has been taken by MPRP, because as the post communist party it has enjoyed real endorsement for its connection to Mongolia's historical past. The Mongols have a particular attitude to communism and evaluation of its communist past is not unambiguously negative. This is seen in independence-related issues – extremely crucial for a country sandwiched between two powerful neighbors.

Although Mongolia proclaimed its independence in 1911, the sovereignty of Mongolia was only recognized by the UN in 1961, with the strong support of the Soviet Union. Political repression and other negative issues connected with Moscow were in some way seen as the price for gaining independence.

According to Mongolian cultural category thinking, every being has its own position in the hierarchic order, therefore so-called the relation of younger and elder brother (Mongolia-Russia) in those times was accepted, because was confirming a certain state of things. The Soviet Union could be perceived as the fierce but protective elder brother, and this does not solely derive from Soviet propaganda. The Mongols accepted the tenets of communism according to the logic of their culture. The translations of communist ideas into Mongolian were undertaken mainly by Buryats, a Mongolian ethnic group living in the USSR and Mongolia, who were also fluent in Russian. The translation of the *Communist Party Manifesto* from Russian to Mongolian, for example, must have been a complex and tricky affair since neither the concept of communism, nor the notion of proletarian class existed in the Mongolian language. The first translation of the *Manifesto* was done in 1925, and the word "communism" was translated as *ev khamtyn yos* – "the principle of being in communal consent" which sounds very positive in a culture where the idea of harmony is a social ideal.

Another positive of communism to the Mongols was its association with ideas of progress. The close cooperation which existed with the Soviet Union yielded rapid development in many spheres and this is still positively perceived by the Mongols; it was considered a step forward towards a progressive European culture and towards new ideas and social institutions. Mongols have also positive opinions of the urbaniza-

tion process, the modernization which took place during collectivization, and of the establishment of both educational and health care systems. All these changes were brought about by the MPRP in a mono-party system, which was perceived by people as a government institution. Thus, the image of an experienced ruling party, which for many Mongols was associated with *tör* (government and legitimacy to govern), still held currency for a long time even after the collapse of the communist system.

This was the reason why the MPRP have been successful in several free elections (with the exception of 1996–2000) and has wielded evident influence especially on the level of local infrastructures, having a reliable network of loyal people at its disposal. In 2010, post communists divided into two separate parties: The Mongolian People's Party and The Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party. The split was initiated by the former Mongolian president, N. Enkhbayar, one of the most prominent politicians affiliated to MPRP. After the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party changed its name and became the Mongolian People's Party, the newly separated Enkhbayar's party seized the name of the old party – MPRP – for itself. This led to good deal of confusion as the new party had the old name and vice versa. The whole situation became even more complicated after Enkhbayar was sentenced to two and a half years in prison for corruption soon after the separation. All these events caused significant changes in the public image of post-communist parties. The party, which had been ruling the country for nearly 70 years and had enjoyed high respect, paradoxically turned to lose its position in terms of cultural symbolism. Such situation gave chance to the democrats. In 2012, for the first time in a 20-year-period Mongolian democrats finally won all levels of elections: parliamentary, presidential and local. However, the Democrats are still considered to be less experienced, disintegrated and too immature to rule. The proof of this seemed to manifest itself when after two years in power, Altanhuyag's team (DP) were dismissed for being unprofessional, corrupt and the cause of the economic crisis.

Another important context for understanding Mongolia's contemporary policy is the mining boom. Mining is a new branch of the economy in Mongolia, unlike extensive livestock production and a traditional nomadic herding lifestyle which were domains of Mongols for centuries. However, for the last decade Mongolia has embarked upon a new era of economic transition due to its newly discovered natural resources: the largest coal deposits in the world and the largest deposits of copper, gold and uranium. As a result, mining has become the primary economic sector which accounts for two thirds of the state's budget revenue. This is quite a substantial amount for Mongolia given the fact that budgetary resources have not scaled such heights before. This has favored rapid development of the country and in 2011 statistics proclaimed Mongolia to be the fastest growing economy in the world with a growth rate of 17%. However, euphoria was short-lived and in 2014, there was a noticeable economic downturn marked by an unemployment rate of 8.8% and inflation at 12.8% which translated into an economic crisis in Mongolia.

Increasing social discontent rose in the wake of the disappointment felt by the wider society from failing to share in the financial benefits accruing from the mining sector. People are asking why immoral politicians have enacted laws that are in conflict with the interests of the state, why they have allowed their virgin homeland to be destroyed, why they have pocketed bribes from foreign companies and why a full one third of the three million population live in poverty while the rich are rolling in money. There are many politicians and political activists in Mongolia, who argue that a democratic system that is not working properly is responsible for this current state of affairs.

In recent years, one can watch a number of initiative projects on the inventing and promoting of particular Mongolian traditions, which have been mooted in order to find optimal forms of governing better adapted to Mongolian realities. However, neither strong anti-government activists proclaiming nationalistic ideas, nor politicians, declaring their patriotic credentials have been able to provide definitive answers as to what the statehood-ruling traditions (*tört yosny ulamjlal*) are.

The state of democracy in Mongolia and its specificity have also piqued the interest of numerous foreign research centers, particularly in recent years, when attention to Mongolia has increased in connection with the mining boom. Research conducted in the field of social and cultural anthropology is especially numerous. One of the most extensive works written on the contemporary changes Mongolia has undergone under the influence of the mining boom is the *Democratic Change In Mongolia* edited by Julian Dierkes. The authors stress that

> "Unusually among Asian post-socialist societies, Mongolian democracy does seem to be somewhat firmly entrenched" (Dierkes 2012,10).

It indicates, at the same time, the weakness of formal institutional capacity and adaptability in a rapidly changing and demanding environment (Dierkes 2012, 302). A thorough analysis of the situation was also conducted by Cambridge research centers under British anthropologists Caroline Humphrey and David Sneath, who point to a number of differences arising from cultural background. David Sneath (2007) in his renowned book *Headless state* writes about the need to apply "appropriate conceptual apparatus of nomads" in relation to particular forms of social institutions, arguing that the imposition of European research categories (in regards, for example to the state) in an analysis of local societies distorts the description of indigenous reality. A number of articles by Caroline Humphrey (2012a, 2012b) and Rebecca Empson (2011, 2012) are also insightful anthropological works on Mongols' specific thinking categories, relevant for understanding local social relations.

Much research has also been carried out based on a western-humanity- methodology perspective using western tools to describe the cultural reality in Mongolia. Anthropologist Paula Sabloff, may be a really sympathetic Mongolian-loving person but her conclusions regarding the Mongols' attitude to democracy are quite far from

my insights. In her book *Does Everyone Want Democracy? Insights from Mongolia* there are many implications that Mongols blindly follow the Western mood and are just repeating what they have read or heard about the Western ideals. She states:

> "Here, people clearly want their country to travel that path [democracy O.T.]. They especially value their freedoms, be they political, economic or human rights. This is evident not only in these interviews but also in the 1992 ratification of a constitution that champions Western democracy and capitalism" (Sabloff 2013, 105).

It is worth pointing out that notions such as personal dignity, human rights and freedom quoted so many times in her interviewees' answers are connected to the Western concept of individualism, developed in 18th–19th century Europe. The idea that all humans must be individualistic personages means that all human beings share ideas of autonomy, privacy, dignity and many others , defined as components of individualism. Whereas in Mongolian cultural context there are no such ideas, or even if there are, they have different meanings on an ontological level. The same situation is to be found in Mongol- attitudes to an understanding of the law contrary to the customary rules – *yos*. It seems the definition of tradition should also be reconsidered in the sphere of the cultural category of thinking. Applying purely western notions in anthropological studies without bearing in mind the differences involved distorts the description of the Mongolian reality.

Reflections on the contemporary social organization of the Mongols inevitably involve the problem of morality. As Stanislaw Zapasnik (2010, 192) says,

> "In Europe, the creation of morality as an independent field of consciousness takes place with development of the idea of individual autonomy, and such a type of morality does not exist in Asian cultures".

A broad anthropological analysis of Mongolian morality is given in the article *Exemplars and rules* by Caroline Humphrey (1997, 25) where she states:

> "The combination of terms used by the Mongols to translate the European idea, *yossurtakhuun*, seems to be of rather recent origin. I shall argue that each of these two terms does, however, denote an area of moral activity which is important in Mongolian culture".

> "*Yos* means the commonly accepted rules of order, reason and custom, while *surtakhuun* (literally 'those things that have been taught') refers to personal ethics. The two are not unconnected, but I shall argue that, as practices of evaluating conduct, they work in different ways".

She also argues that "the most important arena of morality appears in the relation between persons and exemplars or precedents" (Humphrey 1997, 33). In defining "exemplar-focused way of thinking about morality" she notes:

> "... [U]nlike in Europe, in practice almost no place is given to general ethical precepts as emanations of God or society. Rather, such precepts tend to authored and they then appear in relationships as tied to the personalities of both the mentor and the follower" (Humphrey 1997, 33).

The exemplars and not ideas are the most significant here. Comparing Mongolian and Western notions of morality, Humphrey points out that the concept of the Mongols' "exemplar-focused morality" does not correlate with any characteristics of moral standards in the West, which stem from European norms and codes, such as the Catholic catechism, and French or American constitutions (Humphrey 1997, 33–34).

Another anthropologist, Christopher Kaplonski (2006, 67) argues that:

> "History in and of itself is seen as a part of the moral sphere in Mongolia and that this is a result of its structuring around individuals rather than dates or events" [...] Not only exemplars used for "potent moral lessons", but through them, history is seen as being moral at a more fundamental, almost ontological, level".

The concept of "exemplar focused morality", which is really important in understanding the meaning of morality for Mongols, is closely related to the hierarchical vision of universe order, where the main principle of governing relations is connected to the concept of *yos*. *Yos* commonly translated as "custom" or "ritual", bears also the sense of a particular order consistent with the principles governing the universe. Any act consistent with that order is considered to be "proper" (*zöv*) for human beings. What is inconsistent is improper (*buruu*). In this sense, *yos* is different from the concept of "custom" in European cultures, which, as I understand it, refers mainly to the practices and ways of behavior stemming from tradition and understood in the categories of Western culture.

On the relationship of *yos* with morality Humphrey (1997, 28) writes:

> "They make a distinction between rules as socially accepted customs (*yos, zanshil*) and as edicts (*zarlig*) of temporal rulers. However, there is a certain cosmological elision between the two, which suggests that both can be taken by Mongols to be largely concerned with power, and there seems to be a sense in which both are thereby removed from the sphere of morality conceived by the Mongols".

The basic problem in understanding the *yos* is the difficulty of clarifying the concept, because this idea is realized through a combination with other concepts and through a building of a sense of order together with specifying a nature of concepts joined with *yos*. One can therefore speak of a certain elusiveness, but also the ubiquity of this concept, which allows it to be compared with the Chinese idea of *Tao* – the Way-, natural order and etiquette *li* as well. The Dictionary of Classical Mongolian language states: "*Yos* is a property of things that arise inevitably, the path of fate" (*yumny zailshgüi züi togtool, jam tav'lan*). The basic and most widespread form of the word is *yostoi* / *yosgüi* (literally having *yos* / no *yos*) which translates as "should / should not be".

The etymology of the word dates back to texts written in classical Mongolian script, in particular the *Secret History of the Mongols*, the oldest written textual resource on the Mongols from the 13th century. The word *yos* appears in a few text fragments as a synonym for "*tör*" – words of Turkic origin, which in the modern Mongolian lan-

guage means statehood, and when combined with the word *people* (*uls*) means *policy* (*uls tör*). The major characteristics of *tör* were described by T. Skrynnikova:

> "*Tör*" – "the Highest Law" – is something that one can feel, accept, have in the self, transfer, or one can become detached from it. One can follow and submit to this order, but it exists as something external to humans, as it is given from above and not created and humans have nothing to do but comprehend it. Even *khan* is not the creator of *tör* but merely a follower. During the reign of Genghis Khan it was called the law established by the Sky" (Skrynnikova 2013, 59).

> "The law is the principle of universal balance in the micro- and the macrocosm, which ensures compliance with the established order, laws, standards and rules, a compliance that protects harmony in the Universe, Nature and Society. [...] The executor of the Sky's will on earth was the khan, the guardian of the Law" (Skrynnikova 2013, 59).

Thus, in accordance with traditional thinking categories, the Mongolian state is seen as a part of the hierarchically ordered world of goddesses, differing spirits, human beings, and animals, to name just some. Since the state is understood as a being of sorts, its sustainable development must be conducted in harmony with the rest of the universe. Harmony is assured through rituals governed by *yos*. One of the most important rituals at state level is *Ovoo takhikh* which is a sacrificing ceremony on sacred cairns, conducted by the ruler. It is now also carried out by the president, who in the name of his people asks the most powerful mountain spirits to be favourably disposed to the Mongols as the state community. The success of the rituals and the moral backbone of the ruler determine the fate of the community. The canons and etiquette of behavior in Mongolian culture are not as sophisticated as in Confucian China – but though they are a little looser, the basic principle categories of thinking are very similar. This also applies to the conception of a family, where appropriate moral behavior (in accordance with *yos*) of the head of the family shapes the fate of other members. Each family member has clearly defined roles and responsibilities corresponding to hierarchies of age, gender, and respect for the principles appropriate to each of them in providing harmony in the family. It is worth noting that this idea of harmony includes relationships with the world of one's dead ancestors, who can be contacted through particular rituals. One can appeal to them to strengthen so called "vital forces"such as *süld, chiimor', hishig and buyan* (health, luck, prosperity and wealth).

Therefore, human individuals that ontically do not distinguish the self as a separate autonomous being, assume their place according to a given moment and a given set of social order (and space). This is expressed by the word *yostoi* and defines one's behavioral conventions which are dependent upon role and place in society. In such an arrangement, questions such as "*Who am I?*" and *"What is my will?"* are not as important as they are in individualistic cultures. Moreover, manifesting will, through privacy and autonomy are considered negatively and are equated to selfishness. Mongolian conceptual cosmology lacks the idea of individualistic personhood, therefore barely

any tools are available for even contemporary Mongols to distinguish egoism from individualism. I have the impression that the younger generation are at the cusp of discovering the concept of an individual under the influence of Hollywood films and books by authors such as Ayn Rand. However, from my observations of the behavior of the Mongols, I can conclude that the behavioral motives of the vast majority still follow the *yos*. While their emotions and inner thoughts are rather difficult to explore, their external behavior consistent with *yos* can be clearly seen in the social life of ordinary Mongols. This is manifested in the tradition of receiving guests which has changed little through the centuries, topics of discussion, the way tea is served and poured and the way people greet and part.

In traditional culture, humans perceive the self as an integral part of the family, being tied not only through duties and fate but also through receiving the vital force. Emotions are of least importance, though they undoubtedly exist in this culture. This contrasts with Western habits, where the relationship within the family is primarily based on emotional ties between its members, their wills, decisions and choice. The specific cultural attitude to emotions in a social relationship context was described in a book of Sulamith and Jack Potters entitled *Chinese Peasants. The Anthropology of a Revolution* (1990). The cultural construction of emotions they described are very close to the traditional Mongolian ideal of social relations, where emotions are of less importance than rituals and behavior conventions:

> "Because they are assuming the existence of a continuous social order that requires no affirmation in inner emotional response, but only in behavior, there is no need for them to treat emotions as inherently important. Emotional experiences has no formal social consequences (It may, of course, have informal ones). [...] What is uniquely characteristic of the individual's private experience – in particular, the emotional – is socially irrelevant" (Potters and Potters 1990,183).

Another aspect of the *yos*, which has other relevant social consequences is its inter-pretation of customary law, which as a reference to the eternal order ruling the uni-verse, has undoubtedly, a positive meaning. It can be however said that normative law is perceived by the Mongols as superficial, temporary and often negative, as can be seen in terms of criminal law. This negative attitude to the law can also be justified by history as the legislators of the Mongolian law were representatives of the Manchu dynasty transferred the law from the China, and later they were communists who implemented the law from Moscow. According to the Mongolian philosopher Nagaan-buu (2011, 383) *khuul'* (law) is an expression of Manchu origin and thus a strange notion for a Mongolian reality, founded on *yos* relations. In his opinion, *yos* was the true Mongolian concept of law and the renowned legal code of Genghis Khan *Ikh Zasag* (Yasa) was simply *Yeke Yoso* or the "Great *Yos*". There is much debate over what exactly the *Ikh Zasag* was. I think the scholars are right in stating that "The earliest source we have seems to indicate that the *Ikh Zasag* was basically a set of precedents and not a thought-out piece of legislation" (Kaplonski 2006, 84).

Yos, as an important component in the behavior motives of Mongols and has further economic and political relation-consequences. It drives behavior patterns which could be seen as incomprehensible from an economic rationality standpoint. Items such as snuffboxes, saddles (costing thousands of US dollars) and cell phone numbers from one of the cellular networks, starting with lucky numbers 9911 (set people back more than 10 thousand USD) which shock foreigners but work for the Mongols.

The notion of prestige is important here as a kind of criterion by which person deserve or not to occupy a higher position in the social hierarchy. There is no equivalent in the Mongolian language for the word "prestige", which can be interpreted as a feature granted naturally for those located at the top of the social hierarchy. They are referred to as "*ner törtei khün*" – men who have *ner* and *tör*. *Ner* is translated as "name" and *tör* as a synonymous with *yos*: those who have *yos* on their behalf, have the rules, the proper persons. The opposite of *nertör* is *ichikh nüür* – literally "face of shame", which is analogous to the concept of face and the risk of its loss in Chinese culture.

The concept of individual, whose identity is an integral part of the family also has important consequences on a broader social level such as a lack of division between private and public spheres and the construction of non-kin relations in accordance with those in a family. This makes it possible to see the state as an extended family, where the ruler or president, is the father who will be expected to possess characteristics appropriate for the father of the family. *Yos* imposes an obligation on family members to determine specific distribution of welfare in a group. What cannot be afforded by the individual, become possible for a team of family or relatives, including common goals, joint ventures and investments. In situations where the state does not provide security in many spheres of life, people have to rely firmly on each other.

Family interest is even more important for *töriin khünii yos* – obligations pertaining to a statesman or official. Hence, corruption, especially in the mining arena, is quite widespread. It is, however, worth pointing out that the reason for this is not merely wealth accumulation, but as pointed out earlier, the character of obligations and relations between members of a group. Describing the cultural context of corruption in Mongolia, David Sneath distinguishes between "enacting" vs "transacting".

> "Rather than viewing these as negatively and positively valued varieties of a single analytic category – exchange – I argue that transfers of goods and assistance are better viewed as materialization of various types of social relations. As an explanatory idiom exchange should only be applied to some acts of material transfer – transactions. Other categories of transfer are better seen as enactions of aspects of persons and roles for which the language of obligation and expectation are more apt" (Sneath 2006, 90).

The political parties of Mongolia can be analyzed by applying similar referential background. Party membership assumes belonging to some structure not due to any views and ideology, but mainly for the opportunity it affords to have access to jobs

in state institutions, credit loans or chances to win public tenders. It is commonly acknowledged in Mongolia that post-election many officials are hired and fired depending on which team they belong to.

Byambajav Dalaibuyan in his analysis on informal relations in Mongolia argues:

"The revival of traditional social institutions and practices presented an alternative in the 'era of the market'. As opposed to formal political and economic institutions, the informal networks of familial kinship, friendship and other social ties as well as informal rules and practices have come to constitute the primary mechanism through which people gain access to valuable resources, such as information, money, social support and political influence" (Byambajav 2013, 31).

In this situation, ideologies of party and platforms are irrelevant. Thus, even such basic models of western politics as "left/right wing" can be obscured in a Mongolian political context and be empty idioms copied from western political science vocabulary. In this regard, being conservative means backing the communist party, the only previous existing party. On the other hand, Democrats in Mongolia promoting human rights, social equality and the dismantling of the hierarchical mode of society present themselves as right wing in arguing for the importance of pre-communist Mongolian tradition. However, these notions are rarely used and are very confusing for many Mongols. The platforms of the various political parties do not on many substantive points differ greatly.

A look at the political situation in Mongolia would draw the observer to the traditional categories of evaluation which pertain, including, amongst others, the concept of *yos*. A good example of this was the presidential election of 2013, when the candidate of the MPP, Badmaanyambuu Bat-Erdene a famous wrestling champion, was standing. Though he did not win the election, his 41% of support, can be considered a very good result since political conditions were extremely unfavorable for his party and the election campaign was open to question. I am of the opinion that Bat-Erdene actually did not need a PR machine, because he being a wrestler connoted a number of positive cultural meanings. Wrestling, along with archery and horse racing, have great power significance in traditional Mongolian culture. Being a good wrestler also implies having high moral standards according to the criteria of a traditional value system. There are many expressions connected particularly to the wrestling culture. For example, the expression *judag* (magnanimous, righteous, honorable) used mainly in regard to wrestlers, means someone who is *zöv* – the right/proper person.

As mentioned before, in accordance with the traditional way of Mongolian thinking, one of the roles played by the president is the *ovoo takhikh* ceremony. The way the president (in the name of his people) performs the rites is more important than his personality – thus removing the requirement for the president to be a charismatic personality. All he needs is to match the ideal of a good leader. His manners as well as the possession of an appropriate appearance are of greater relevance.

The leader should exude a regal and dignified posture and Bat-Erdene fulfilled these requirements perfectly.

The electorate gave Elbegdorj, the candidate from the Democratic Party, 50% of the votes. As one of the initiators of the democratic movement his political image is associated with ideas of human rights, liberalism, democracy; though it seems that a majority of Mongolian society is not yet ready to understand those ideas. The reason why Elbegdordj won the election, in my opinion, is that he managed to mobilize the capacity for family, friendship and local bonds to establish networks supporting him. Naming the phenomenon of Mongolian election in terms of social capital in socio-logical research is evidently not enough to characterize Mongolian political realm.

To summarize, a part of Mongol society are proud of the rapid development of their economy as it fulfills their aspirations of living in a modern country. It is hard to disagree with this when we look at the high skyscrapers and the sprawling capital abound. However, in my opinion, the factor behind this development lies not in a well-established market and effective legal system, but in collective entrepreneurial manage-ment skills. Certain cultural orientations rooted deeply in traditional ethical norms of *yos* unwrap a range of behavior models, distinct from those in Western cultures. On the one hand, many economic projects: familial, public or even state undertak-ings suffer from poor cost calculations, but on the other, they are accompanied with a belief in luck and an absence of risk-taking fear. Relying on family, strength, wit but in conjunction with a disinterest in privacy and private property – all these cultural peculiarities, stemming from the notion of *yos,* have allowed many Mongols to achieve success. This success is of a collective and family nature, although it is proving to be more difficult to achieve at the level of state organization.

Bearing this broad sense of *yos* in mind, conclusions on how Mongols perceive democracy can be understood as stated by Sabloff:

> "They believe that democracy will better enable them align their deeply held values and personal goals with the lifestyle they desire than other forms of government, particularly communism. Some want democracy to gain freedom from oppression or government control of their lives. [...] Some want it for self-determination. Others believe it will help them and their nation attain dignity. And still oth-ers consider it the best way to help them meet family obligations or succeed in the global economy. Democracy, in other words, is more than a form of government; it is a way of life" (Sabloff 2013, 2).

My conclusion is that democracy, as an idea, in terms of the Mongolian cultural category of thinking, has to be seen through the lens of *yos*, a part of the commonly accepted rules of a cosmic order which inevitably comes. The process of democrati-zation involves legal procedures which are in many cases misaligned with Mongol-ethical norms. Thorough research on the rules of *yos* from Mongolian historical and philosophical perspectives could provide an important aspect of *tört yosny ulamljal* – the tradition of ruling statehood that Mongols have been searching so intensively for.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B y a m b a j a v D. 2012. Formal and informal networks in post-socialist Mongolia: Access, uses, and inequalities. In J. Dierkes (ed.), *Change in Democratic Mongolia, Social Relations, Health, Mobile Pastoralism, and Mining*. Leiden, Boston, 31–54.

D i e r k e s J. (ed.) 2012. *Change in Democratic Mongolia. Social Relations, Health, Mobile Pastoralism, and Mining*. Leiden, Boston.

E m p s o n R. 2011. *Harnessing fortune. Personhood, Memory and Place in Mongolia*. Oxford.

E m p s o n R. 2012. The Dangers of Excess. Accumulating and Dispersing Fortune in Mongolia. *Social Analysis* 56 (Issue 1). 1–16. doi: 10.3167/sa.2012.560108.

H u m p h r e y C. 1997. Exemplars and rules. Aspects of the discourse of moralities in Mongolia. In S. Howell (ed.), *The ethnography of moralities*, 25–47.

H u m p h r e y C. 2012a. Favors and "normal heroes". The case of socialist higher education. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 2, 22–24.

H u m p h r e y C. and H ü r e l b a a t a r U. 2012b. Fortune in the Wind: An Impersonal Subjectivity. *Social Analysis* 56 (2), 152–167.

K a p l o n s k i C. 2006. Exemplars and heroes: the individual and the moral in the Mongolian political imagination. In D. Sneath (ed.), *States of mind: Power, place and subject in Inner Asia*. Western Washington University.

N a g a a n b u u B. H. 2011. *Mongolchuudyn yazguur gün u khaan*. Ulaanbaatar.

P o t t e r S. H. and P o t t e r J. M. 1990. *China's Peasants: The Anthropology of a Revolution*. Cambridge.

S a b l o f f P. 2013. *Does Everyone Want Democracy? Insights from Mongolia*. California.

S n e a t h D. 2006. Transacting and enacting: Corruption, obligation and the use of monies in Mongolia. *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 71 (1), 89–112.

S k r y n n i k o v a T. D. 2013. *Charizma i vlast' w epohu Cingis-hana*. Sanktpetersburg.

Z a p a ś n i k S. 2010. Tolerancja a odmienni kulturowo. In I. Jakubowska-Branicka (ed.), *O tolerancji we współczesnej demokracji liberalnej*. Warszawa.

Author's address:

Oyungerel Tangad, Ph.D.
Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology
Polish Academy of Sciences
Al. Solidarności 105, 00-140 Warszawa, POLAND
e-mail: 3margad@gmail.com

THE NOBLE MINORITY.
THE RENAISSANCE OF AINU CULTURE
IN CONTEMPORARY JAPAN

LUCJAN BUCHALIK

THE MUNICIPAL MUSEUM IN ŻORY

The Ainu is a small group of indigenous people now living mainly in Hokkaido. From the sixteenth century, they were in constant contact with the Japanese, often fighting with them. In the Meji period, beginning in 1868, the Japanese settlement on Hokkaido intensified. The Ainu were discriminated against and pushed to the margins, resulting in poverty following suit. As a consequence, Ainu culture began to regress and their language disappeared. This, however, did not result in the complete detachment of the community from tradition. Currently, although the Ainu do not lead a traditional way of life, they try to cultivate their culture based on ancestral rituals. The traditional culture of the Ainu people is known mainly due to the work of scientists, such as Bronisław Piłsudski. In the second half of the 20th century the renaissance of Ainuan culture flourished and the social activist and Ainu culture expert, Shigeru Kayano, played a major role in this. This article was prepared on the basis of available literature and interviews with the Ainu people as well as with Japanese authorities, researchers and museologists in 2015.

*   *   *

Ajnowie to niewielka grupa autochtonów zamieszkująca dziś głównie Hokkaido. Od XVI w. byli w stałym kontakcie z Japończykami, często prowadząc z nimi walki. W epoce Meji, począwszy od 1868 r., nastąpiła intensyfikacja osadnictwa japońskiego na Hokkaido. Ajnowie byli dyskryminowani; zostali zepchnięci na margines, co skutkowało ubóstwem. W konsekwencji, kultura Ajnów zaczęła ulegać regresowi, a ich język zanikł. Nie spowodowało to jednak całkowitego oderwania się społeczności od tradycji. Obecnie, chociaż Ajnowie nie prowadzą tradycyjnego stylu życia, to starają się pielęgnować swoją kulturę opartą na tradycjach przodków. Kulturę Ajnów znamy głównie dzięki pracy wielu naukowców, m.in. Bronisława Piłsudskiego. W II poł. XX w. nastąpił renesans kultury ajnuskiej. Dużą rolę w tym odegrał działacz społeczny i znawca Ajnów, Shigeru Kayano. Artykuł został przygotowany na podstawie literatury oraz wywiadów przeprowadzonych z Ajnami, a także z japońskimi urzędnikami, badaczami i muzealnikami w 2015 r.

K e y w o r d s: Ainu, Bronisław Piłsudski, Shigeru Kayano, discrimination, Japanization, assimilation, culture and ethnic issue.

INTRODUCTION[1]

Until the 18th century, the Ainu were the indigenous inhabitants of the northern parts of Japan's Honshu and Hokkaido islands, Sakhalin and Kuril Islands and the southern end of the Kamchatka Peninsula (Russian Federation) (Majewicz 1991, 17). They lived by hunting and gathering and by trade with Japanese merchants. The Ainu formed a segmentary society in which each *kotan* (village) had its own leader. There was not a single chief of all the Ainu people in Hokkaido, nor was there any central authority; they would unite only in the face of external threat. They spoke the Ainu language, considered to be a language isolate, which had 19 dialects (Internet 1). Unlike their mongoloid neighbors, the non-oriental appearance of the Ainu, particularly their luxuriant hair, attracted the attention of the first travelers. At the turn of the 20th century they primarily aroused the interest of the anthropologists[2]. The Ainu used to be portrayed as Stone Age people seated in front of poor cottages "manually making clay pots, or on forest bogs, or in the fields, wearing hides and bast fiber clothes, weeding with an antler instead of a metal tool" (Radliński 1901, 180). At the turn of the 20th century they were marginalized and dominated by the Japanese in Hokkaido and after 1945 they were almost completely displaced from Sakhalin and the Kuril Islands (once these were taken over by the Soviet Union). Today the Ainu claim that in the past their culture was destroyed as the result of assimilation policy imposed by the Japanese. Many Ainu people were discriminated against, which caused poverty, among other things.

This article presents the process of rebirth of the culture and ethnic identity of the Ainu, as seen by an ethnologist. The author had an opportunity to study the problem of domination of larger ethnic groups over smaller ones using the example of the

[1] This article is written on the basis of literature, and interviews conducted with the local Ainu in Hokkaido, members of Ainu associations, self-government authorities, museologists and scientists. During my stay (June 2015) I visited the following places: the Ainu Museum „Porotokotan" in Shiraoi, Nibutani Ainu Culture Museum in Nibutani, Shigeru Kayano Nibutani Ainu Museum, Ainu Culture Promotion Center „Sapporo Pirka Kotan" (www.city.sapporo.jp/shimin/pirka-kotan), the Former Hokkaido Government Office in Sapporo, Botanic Garden Hokkaido University in Sapporo (Museum and National Treasures, Ainu Museum), Hokkaido Museum in Sapporo, the Hokkaido University Museum, Hokkaido University, Sapporo University. I met with folk groups in Nibutani-Biratori, Sapporo, Shiraoi, with craftsmen in Biratori-Nibutani, with representatives of the self-government for the Ainu in Sapporo, associations: the Ainu Association of Hokkaido (www.ainu-assn.or.jp), Sapporo Univ. Urespa Club (www.facebook.com/urespaclub), Sapporo Ainu Culture Promotion Center (www.city.sapporo.jp/shimin/pirka-kotan), The Ainu Museum Foundation (www.ainu-museum.or.jp), Hokkaido Poland Cultural Association (http://hokkaido-poland.com).
I would especially like to thank Prof. A. Majewicz, T. Matsumoto and T. Kodama.
[2] There appeared demand for their bone material. Shocking practices, from a contemporary point of view, took place: Ainu cemeteries were pillaged in search of the skeletons of buried Ainu people. Polish people also took part in those activities. The skulls of the Ainu were brought to Poland by B. Dybowski (Radliński 1901, 186).

Kurumba people gobbled up by the more numerous Mossi in Burkina Faso in West Africa[3]. A trip to Hokkaido enabled observation of the same phenomenon in a different cultural context.

JAPANESE MIGRATIONS TO THE ISLAND OF EZO

The first records of fighting on the island of Ezo (the former name of Hokkaido) date back to the 7th and 8th centuries, i.e. the time when Japanese settlers entered into conflicts with the Emishi (indigenous people). In the chronicles there are also records of diplomatic contacts between the two populations (Totman 2009, 82, 86). Until the 16th century Ezo was inhabited almost exclusively by the Ainu. Already at that time the migration of the Japanese from Honshu had begun (Majewicz 1991, 27). Their surge into Ezo caused economic and political feuds between the two communities[4]. The Japanese Matsumae clan which colonized Ezo exerted pressure on the Ainu, imposed fiscal obligations and limitations on their trade.

> "Tensions between the merchants settling in Wajinchi and indigenous Ainu groups led to a series of clashes, and in the 1660s Shukashain, the leader of the Ainu, attained dominant position among the Ainu of the Hidaka region, east of the Oshima Peninsula" (Totman 2009, 286).

It was one of numerous armed uprisings of the Ainu against the Japanese[5]. From the brochure issued by The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture (FRPAC) it may be concluded that their ancestors were treacherously defeated.

> "During the banquet celebrating the reconciliation, Shakushain was murdered in a surprise attack, thus bringing the war of the Ainu to an end[6]" (Majewicz 1991, 30).

The source reads that many conflicts ended with a treacherous attack. Usually the Wajin suggested settling a dispute by way of negotiation. The Ainu would not reject

---

[3] An interesting analysis of this phenomenon has been provided by two French ethnologists: J.-L. Amselle (1999) and M. Izard (1985); the former divided West African societies into encompassing societies (*sociétés englobantes*) and encompassed ones (*sociétés englobées*). The latter, based on his research in Burkina Faso, presented the tribes in a certain juxtaposition: autochthons on the one hand, and on the other the people in power who exert pressure on the autochthons. The combination of these two concepts illustrates the relations between dominating and dominated groups.

[4] Japanese colonization advanced from the Oshima Peninsula in the south; the area was later called Wajinchi meaning the Land of the Japanese. In literature the term often denotes the Japanese who settled in the Ainu territories in the south of Hokkaido island.

[5] The uprising in 1456 led by Koshamain was the first spectacular protest of the Ainu against the Japanese. Allegedly, it was triggered by the murder of one of the Ainu by a Japanese blacksmith (Majewicz 1991, 29; no author, 2013, 4).

[6] Once Ezo was pacified by the Japanese, the name of Shakushaim was doomed to oblivion, yet with time it became the symbol of the Ainu's opposition against the Japanese (Majewicz 1991, 30).

such solutions and they would sit down to talks with utmost solemnity. When formal discussions with their recent enemy were coming to an end and the tension lessened, the Wajin would mount a sudden attack (no author, 2013, 6). As Alfred Majewicz notes, the Ainu won battles and the Japanese won wars (1991, 30). As a result of lost wars the Ainu were forced to work hard for the benefit of their new lords. Furthermore, the inflow of a large number of settlers caused depletion of fauna which acutely affected the Ainu. All that combined brought on the deterioration of their economic situation and, as a consequence, the reduction of population.

Subsequent discriminatory actions against the Ainu took place in the first half of the 19th century.

> "Furthermore, the ban on wearing bamboo hats, straw raincoats and Japanese sandals, which had been imposed by the Matsumae clan, was lifted. The shogunate forced the Ainu to change their hairstyles, garments and names and the like to those of Honshu and outlawed traditional Ainu customs and manners, including earrings, tattoos[7], and the ceremony to avert the spirits of bears. During the second ruling of the shogunate, the aforementioned measures were reinforced, provoking the antipathy of the Ainu" (no author, 2013, 7).

Yet the real problems of the Ainu began only in the second half of the 19th century. In the aftermath of the process of extinction of the Ainu language, which had already started at the beginning of the 19th century (Majewicz 1991, 15), only 10 people could speak the language at the beginning of the 21st century (Bradley 2007).

CHANGES DURING THE MEIJI ERA

According to M. Nomoto, the director of the Ainu Museum in Shiraoi: "it is impossible to understand contemporary Ainu without regard to the impact of the Meiji Era". That is why the changes of that time will be discussed in a greater detail. In 1868 the new government incorporated Ezo into Japan and changed the name of the island to Hokkaido. According to Majewicz (1984, 16) this marked the beginning of effective Japanization of the Ainu in Hokkaido. In the Kuril Islands the process started in 1875 and in Sakhalin in 1905.

> "Government took administrative and judicial power over Ainu villages into its own hands. This process, together with the advance of capitalism and the deterioration of the old ecology, deprived Ainu villages of the unique nature of their community life and destroyed the integrity of their social

---

[7] Tattoos on the arms (from hand to ankle) and around the mouth were characteristic elements of the Ainu culture. Only women were tattooed. Once tattooing was banned, the Ainu were afraid that they would anger their goddess and be befallen by a disaster. Many, despite the ban, practiced their old rituals. The last fully tattooed woman died in 1998. At the end of the 20th century some women applied temporary tattoos over their body during holidays and celebrations (Internet 6).

life. As a result, an Ainu village became just a hamlet where the inhabitants were Ainu, not a community where the Ainu lived as they used to live" (Takakura 1966, 19).

The Ainu were integrated into the rest of society and identified as "ordinary" in people censuses. However, discrimination did not stop. In the same year the Development Commission that ruled in Hokkaido delegalized the language, culture and lifestyle of the Ainu and initiated their intensive Japanization.

"It took away the land and resources of the Ainu, making these national property. This property was then sold to the private sector. Salmon fishing and deer hunting were banned.[8] (...) As a result of the policy that gave priority to development advantageous to *Wajin*, the situation of the Ainu worsened, even to the point that they did not have enough food. Although agriculture was encouraged, in many cases it was difficult to change lifestyles overnight. For this reason, the Ainu were mistakenly defined as being deficient in property management skills, resulting in restrictions on their rights to own land and other property" (no author, 2013, 8).

The abovementioned M. Namoto highlights that

"after the revolution (Meiji), fishing and hunting for animals living in the mountains, all of these activities were controlled by the government, state. There were restrictions in this area. However, later on, regardless of whether you were Ainu or not, inhabitants of a given district had to receive a concession to be able to perform their usual activities".

Since 1876 the Ainu started to be treated as Japanese citizens. The annotation *kyudojin* meaning aborigine that was made in their documents was an imprint which hindered access to education and careers. Those discriminatory notes were eliminated only after the Second World War. They were forced to cultivate land but forced farming was ineffective and did not compensate for losses caused by government bans on hunting and fishing. What is worse, it contributed to the disintegration of the traditional social system connected with the economy that had been in place so far (Majewicz 1991, 32–33).

The poor economic situation of the Ainu was acknowledged by decision-making bodies. To address the issue, in 1899 the Former Aborigines Protection Act was enacted. The law provided for the granting of land for cultivation to the Ainu, instructing them on farming and assimilating with the rest of society by way of teaching Japanese, among other things. Some Ainu learned to farm, but many failed. It was because a part of the land given to them had never been fit for cultivation. Another issue was the amount of land they were given. The Ainu received less land than the Wajin who came from the south. Such actions reflect ethnic discrimination of the Ainu. Public

---

[8] According to J. Batchelor (1901, 17–18), the change in diet was one of the reasons for the decrease in the population of the Ainu. B. Piłsudski held a different view and claimed that Batchelor overgeneralized and drew conclusions from the example of a limited number of villages. "In the majority of cases the Ainu live on sea or river fish" (1913, 90).

schools completely ignored the culture and language of the Ainu. Children had to learn Japanese customs and language. They were separated from the Wajin and this resulted in even greater discrimination (no author, 2013, 8–9).

In our times, the difference in the economic situation of the Ainu and Japanese people living in Hokkaido is still visible. It is highlighted by members of the Ainu Association M. Isikawa and K. Kaisawa who state that the Ainu receive social welfare benefits more often than Japanese people. "The basic problem is to improve the standard of living to help the Ainu; the other one is to promote Ainu culture."

The Japanese had a very unfavorable opinion of the Ainu, they called them *ebisu* meaning "wild" or "barbarians" (Majewicz 1984, 15). They thought them to be dirty, greedy, cunning and keen on alcohol and they believed that "they descend from dogs and resemble dogs from the waist down; they even have tails" (Sieroszewski 1957, 30, 39, 19). The Ainu did not think well of the Japanese either. They considered them to be the plunderers of their land and hunting grounds and complained about being disliked and ridiculed by the Japanese (Sieroszewski 1957, 21, 52, 27).

This was the situation in which Piłsudski and Sieroszewski found themselves upon their arrival in Hokkaido at the beginning of the 20th century. Both scientists recognized the tragic fate of the Ainu and Piłsudski had witnessed that problem in Sakhalin. It seems that the Polish scientists stayed among the Ainu in Hokkaido during their most difficult time. They were not indifferent to their fate. In 1909 in Société d'Anthropologie de Paris Piłsudski lectured on the indigenous peoples of Sakhalin. In his closing words he said: "They are dying out, they are fading... Already at this moment they are rapidly losing their identity due to destructive contact with the invaders" (Zawistowicz 1930, 31).

Sieroszewski noted that "the influence of the Japanese does not only threaten the customs, beliefs, pottery and clothing of the Ainu but also their physical type" (Sieroszewski 1957, 24). He gave one example of a Japanized Ainu man who had married a Japanese woman and spoke only Japanese to his children at home (Sieroszewski 1957, 54–55). This was not an isolated case; such behaviors contributed greatly to the extinction of the Ainu language and culture.

Later, the situation of the Ainu started to improve. However, as a result of the changes that had begun in the Meiji Era in the first half of the 20th-century, specialists started to consider the Ainu as extinct people. In the mid-1960s professor S. Takakura wrote:

> "An anthropological tragedy of World War II was the destruction of the last Chance to study firsthand the primitive culture of the Ainu people before it totally disappeared. The remaining Ainu live on Hokkaido, the northernmost Island of the Japanese archipelago. Perhaps about a hundred 'pure' Ainu are left, but only in the sense that each retains pure Ainu blood. Culturally every Ainu of today is 'diluted'. As a race that had its own language, religion, method of house building, and other cultural traits and institutions, the Ainu are a thing of the past. There are what people call 'Ainu villages', but

this is just a name. Any distinctively traditional way of life is preserved only as a tourist attraction. Today, the Ainu live as the Japanese live-except that many are poorer than ordinary Japanese workers and farmers" (Takakura 1966, 16–17).

In this context the words from the already cited FRPAC brochure take on an interesting meaning:

> "Since the Meiji era, the Ainu have walked down a rocky road and have faced groundless discrimina-tion and the denial of their unique culture. The Ainu were considered a dying ethnic group, their culture a dying culture. It was from this perspective that Kyosuke Kindaichi[9] and other Wajin research-ers conducted research on Ainu culture. The Ainu, however, never succumbed to social prejudice and strove to protect their culture and hand it down to the next generation" (no author 2013, 26).

It seems that the Ainu nurtured their culture in secret, away from the strangers. They preserved it for future generations as their most precious treasure. Still, it was hardly feasible for the Ainu to hide their culture from many scientists from different countries. The above quote is more of an emotional statement by its authors about their own people with whom they identify, rather than a balanced scientific assessment.

Discrimination of the Ainu by a dominant group mobilized them to strive to get rid of their Ainu character and adapt to the Japanese society in Hokkaido. They thought it to be the only way to fight poverty. H. Hiramura from the Biratori Museum says that

> „after the Meiji Revolution in 1868, there was an enforced assimilation, Japanization of the Ainu and thus there was less and less Ainu culture in our society."

Sieroszewski (1957, 61) has already pointed out that many among the Ainu "were proud of their Japanese descent". In conversation with the author Majewicz said "The Ainu wanted to vanish at all cost; they forbade their children to speak the language and were determined to become Japanized". If someone suggested: "You are Ainu", people would immediately reply "No, I'm not. Absolutely not!" This has been affirmed by the already mentioned director M. Nomoto who says: "still, despite all the changes in the attitude towards the Ainu, they are ashamed to admit to being Ainu". Questions about ethnic origin are considered racist and therefore it is not officially allowed to ask: "Are you Ainu?", which significantly hinders estimations of the number of Ainu inhabitants in Hokkaido.

THE RENAISSANCE OF AINU CULTURE

The first improvement took place in the democracy of the Taishō period (1910–20) – the time of liberal movements in Japan. The Ainu people, who had been protest-ing against discrimination and prejudice, became very active. In this period, the first

---

[9] K. Kindaichi (1882–1971), Japanese linguist, researcher of the language and oral literature of the Ainu.

Ainu organizations were created and Ainu people themselves had their representatives in district councils. During World War II, the peak of Japanese nationalism and chauvinism, studies concerning Ainu people as a group different from the Japanese were not welcomed by official factors. An excellent Japanese expert on Ainu people – professor S. Takakura – believes that "the last world war destroyed our last chance to save Ainu people" (Majewicz 1983, 33). The degeneration of Ainu culture is also noted Majewicz. He states that Ainu people have undergone a total acculturation and an absolute Japanization but also explains that "Ainu elements are not cultivated seriously anymore and everything which is presented to us as Ainu is only a display" (Majewicz 1983, 63). In the Meiji period, even their surnames were changed and they were written only in Japanese. An excellent example of such Japanization is the very popular surname Kazaiwa – in Japanese it means 'valley of shells' (*kai* – shell, *zawa* – valley) – characteristic of Ainu people in the Biratori region. In the original, Ainu version this surname was Pipauszi (*pipa* – shell, *uszi* – valley) but nowadays there it is no longer possible to find people with this surname.

In order to protect the remains of Ainu culture, the Ainu Association of Hokkaido was established in 1961. Its main goal was to represent the interests of Ainu people. The agricultural reform took place in the same time and its objective was to take land away from owners and sell it to small farmers at a low price. The Association objected to this reform and pointed out that the pillage of Ainu lands in the past had been completely forgotten in these circumstances. In the 20th century, Ainu people owned only 15% of their rightful lands. In the 1960s, there were aspirations to improve the living conditions of Ainu people – community halls were established and new jobs created in the vicinity of Ainu people settlements. All of the efforts were aimed at the improvement of their living standards.

"In 1984, the Ainu Association of Hokkaido (formerly the Hokkaido Ainu Association) drafted and proposed Legislation Concerning the Ainu People, which called for the recovery of the basic human rights of the Ainu, the elimination of discrimination against them, the introduction of special legislative seats in politics aimed at enabling the direct reflection of the views of Ainu representatives. The implementation of comprehensive educational and cultural measures, and the improvement of some conditions including agriculture, fishery, forestry, commerce, and industry to allow them to achieve economic independence. The Association lobbied for the enactment of this new law at the Hokkaido Government, the central government, the Diet and other organizations. In 1986 when the Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone stated that «Japan is a racially homogeneous nation and there is no discrimination against ethnic minorities with Japanese citizenship», discussions and campaigns related to the Ainu became brisk. In addition, the Ainu began to pay attention to global trends in the rights of indigenous people, accelerating exchanges with other countries. With the aforementioned trends as background, the first Ainu took a seat in the Diet" (no author, 2013, 10).

Predictions made by Takakura in the 1960s and later also by Majewicz concerning the disappearance of Ainu culture would probably have come true had it not been for

the impressive growth of the Ainu's ethnic consciousness, which took place at the end of the 20th century. This growth was greatly influenced by the first and, so far, the only member of parliament of Ainu descent, social activist Shigeru Kayano (1926–2006) from Biratori. He inspired the creation of the Ainu Culture Museum in Nibutani in 1972. H. Hiramura from the Biratori Museum says that "after the Meiji Revolution in 1868, there was an enforced assimilation, Japanization of the Ainu and thus there was less and less Ainu culture in our society." Thanks to his efforts 15 schools of the Ainu language were established (Internet 2). At first, authorities opposed claiming that learning in language other than Japanese was forbidden by law. In 1977, on his initiative, and for the first time in many years, *iomante* (the holiday which celebrates sending a bear's spirit to the supernatural world) was organized and it was not meant for tourists[10] (Majewicz 1991, 234, 153). From an ethnological point of view, his biggest accomplishment was writing a book describing the material culture of Ainu people in the middle of the 20th century (Kayano 2014). He was a member of the parliament from 1994 to 1998. He became famous for the fact that during sessions of the National Diet he spoke in the Ainu language which caused consternation among his Japanese colleagues. As noted by Majewicz, he forced Japanese people to change their attitude towards the Ainu. Thanks to his efforts, an act aimed at the promotion of Ainu culture (Law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture and for the Dissemination and Advocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture) was passed in 1997. The first article states that

> "This law aims to realize the society in which the ethnic pride of the Ainu people is respected and to contribute to the development of diverse cultures in our country (…)".

All of these legal actions constituted an inherent part of a greater context of international activities. A decade later, the UN took care of the problem of autochthons, modern ethnic minorities: In September 2007, the United Nations General Assembly passed „United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". In addition, in June 2007, the Japanese National Diet, on the basis of the aforementioned Declaration, passed "a resolution that recognized the Ainu as indigenous peoples of Japan". These actions caused Japanese society to start showing an interest in the Ainu and their culture. However, according to the authors of the quoted brochure published by FRPAC, "unfortunately we still experience discrimination and an unstable life situation" (no author 2013, 11).

> "In the decade from 1975 to 1984, the restoration of ceremonies was called for, and the ceremony to send back bear spirits was carried out in Biratori, Shiraoi, Asahikawa and elsewhere. In 1983, the ceremony to send back the spirit of Blakiston's fish owls was performer at Lake Kussharo. At the Toyohira River in Sapporo, the ceremony to receive new salmon has been carried out since 1982 and

---

[10] Killing a bear during *iomante* was considered very cruel by the Japanese (the animal was smothered with two logs) and thus it was forbidden (Majewicz 1991, 160).

this ceremony has recently come to be carried out in many other places as well. The practice of offering prayers for the repose of departed Ainu is flourishing anew in various areas" (no author 2013, 26).

As a result of the progressing assimilation, these ceremonies were abandoned. According to the aforementioned M. Isikawa and K. Kaisawa „the renewal of the *yomante* custom is an important element for the renaissance of Ainu culture". However, it is worth mentioning that *yomante* (the ceremony to send back bear spirits) used to have a religious character, whereas nowadays, it is more of a folk festival nature.

This new interest in Ainu people can be mostly observed in the number of publications in the press regarding them. The bibliography of works about Ainu people in Japanese from 1978 allows us to conclude that until the middle of the 1970s they were not a very popular subject of press publications (Matsushita and Kimi 1978). In the 1980s, the situation drastically changed which has been noted Majewicz during his stay in Japan (1991, 245). At the beginning of the 21st century, Ainu people are still a focus of media attention. There are movies promoting Ainu culture, the number of scientific and popular-scientific books, as well as books for children which can be purchased in bookstores, museum shops or via the Internet increased (Internet 3). Other manifestations of this renaissance are museums providing treasuries of knowledge and tradition. Before the time when the abovementioned museum in Nibutani was created in 1967, the municipal authorities had built a folklore museum in Shiraoi which nowadays is called the Ainu Museum (*Shiraoi Minzoku Shiryōkan*). The museum located on the lake shore also comprises an open-air ethnographic museum, where educational classes take place, as well as an exhibition pavilion. The museum is run by a foundation whose goal is to cultivate Ainu traditions. In 2020, it is supposed to become a national museum.

A spectacular event in the Ainu-Japanese relations was an incident related to the Ainu tradition of launching the first boat of the season on the river. According to the tradition, this event should take place on the Saru River near Nibutani. In 1997, despite the objections of Ainu people, a dam was built. An artificial lake was created and it flooded the land where the described ceremony was supposed to take place. Two Ainu men (T. Kaizawa and S. Kayano) accused the government of the illegal seizure of lands for dam building which disturbed their cultural legacy and holy places where ceremonies important to them take place. The case was examined by the Sapporo District Court. K. Ichimiya, who was the main judge, stated that Ainu people have an original culture and that they had inhabited Hokkaido before the Japanese came there. In this situation their rights should be protected according to Article 13 of Japan's Constitution, which protects the rights of the individual, and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. It should be mentioned, that by this time the government in Tokyo had refused to acknowledge the Ainu people as an indigenous population (Internet 4). As a consequence of the process, the water from the lake was drained and Ainu people could perform their traditional, spring ceremonies. Later,

the authorities came to an agreement with the Ainu and in the consecutive years water was not drained from the lake (an interview with A. Majewicz).

The renaissance of Ainu consciousness – as a new phenomenon – was a great surprise and challenge for Japanese people themselves because they had to overcome centuries-old prejudices. Aggressive statements about Ainu people appeared in the public domain. One of the authors wrote:

> "Ainu people, it is said that even dogs do not forget kindness and the Japanese have shown you so much kindness (...) you should be careful. As you do not have your own writing you cannot possibly have any idea where your ancestors came from. (...) If you still want to live in Japan you should be only thankful to Japanese people that they let you live on Hokkaido" (Majewicz 1991, 233).

An immediate improvement of the Ainu's living situation did not take place along with their cultural renaissance. Until now, inhabitants of Hokkaido of Ainu descent are poorer, they require financial support, they are less educated and thus the beginning of their professional careers is harder. The Sapporo district Social Welfare Center more often helps Ainu families than Japanese ones. Ainu people have problems with managing their affairs, they are less ingenious. "Inequalities should be equaled. Ainu culture has to be respected, they are primeval inhabitants of this land". According to the global trend, minority cultures should be referred to with respect, which is especially reflected in the two sentences above. Some do not admit that they are Ainu because they fear discrimination. The main cause of Ainu people's poverty is a lack of education. A child's school attendance is not essential for uneducated parents. Money is more important than school, people need to earn money. M. Isikawa from the Ainu Association of Hokkaido believes that this situation is improving: "the difference in the standard of living is decreasing and an increasing number of Ainu people are starting to attend universities".

AINU CULTURE IN THE 21ST CENTURY

> "Since the enactment of the 1997 Law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture and for the Dissemination and Advocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture, cultural oral tradition and conversation activities by the Ainu have become more significant. In addition to restoration of the aforementioned spiritual culture, the restoration of lifestyle and culture, such as construction of houses, building of boats and sewing of clothes, have been carried out by Ainu throughout Hokkaido as well as by those living on Honshu, centering on the Kanto area. The 'points' of conventional oral tradition and conversation activities have been joined to form a 'surface'. We must not forgot the efforts of *ekas* and *fuci* (elder men and women) who faithfully inherited traditional culture despite the adversity they faced" (no author 2013, 27).

H. Hiramura states that "100 years after the Meiji Revolution, there appeared new ideas to promote primeval inhabitants. (...) We have to respect culture and traditions of

those who used to live here". Thanks to this tendency, there appeared museums, groups and people who want to appreciate Ainu culture here and in other places. Museums, folk groups and institutions promoting Ainu culture were created. The last group may include the Ainu Culture Promotion Center in Sapporo Pirka Kotan. M. Tanaka who works in the Center says that „its main goal is to promote Ainu culture, a mutual understanding between the Ainu and Japanese people; it is also a place of meetings between the Ainu and the rest of the society."

In 2013, the municipal authorities estimated that 13 000 people who identify themselves as Ainu live on Hokkaido. It is believed that 10 times as many people do not admit to their Ainu descent, usually they are people from mixed, Ainu-Japanese marriages. Hiding one's descent is an effect of the state's policy against the Ainu and their poor social status. This policy has changed and now more and more people admit to their Ainu origins. However, it is still a very delicate matter.

K. Sekine, who teaches the Ainu language in Biratori, believes that in today's Japan no one speaks the Ainu language fluently. On Hokkaido, there is about 10–20 people who know the language better than he does but this level of fluency does not give opportunities for free conversation. In their conversations, Ainu people use the Japanese language. The data quoted above are not precise because, as stated above, a direct question about ethnicity is impossible and numerous descendants of mixed marriages hide their origin. H. Hiramura, in the Ainu Museum in Biratori-Nibutani, points out that despite organized oratory competitions the Ainu language is not commonly used:

"There are about 5 300 inhabitants in Biratori, only a few of them speak Ainu and only several dozens of them can converse in this language at a basic level. This is a very small number. We are trying to extend the knowledge of this language. The biggest problem is that the Ainu language is not written, it is only spoken".

This disappearance of the Ainu language is an effect of assimilation policy, Japanization: "You were not allowed to speak Ainu, it was some kind of discrimination which still exists to a certain degree. You are Ainu so you are treated in a worse way". Young people choose the Japanese language because this is a language of social advancement. The Ainu language is a synonym of backwardness, poverty.

W. Nakamura, who is the assistant manager in the Hokkaido Museum, observes that:

"even on Hokkaido knowledge about the Ainu is not so extensive. Of course it is better than in other regions of the country. That is why, among other things, posters and a statue were placed at Sapporo station – and this is only the beginning. People will be more aware of Ainu culture and tradition."

Nakamura speaks about a campaign started in 2013 which is supposed to promote Ainu culture on Hokkaido using the motto – *Irankarapte.* The campaign was supposed to remind people that on the June 6th, 2008 the Japanese Parliament passed

a resolution to recognize the Ainu as an indigenous population of Japan. The phrase *Irankarapte* means "let me gently touch your heart (soul)". It symbolizes Hokkaido's hospitality, it enables people to get acquainted with the culture and spirit of the Ainu, it speaks about the symbiosis with nature, the coexistence of different cultures and the creation of an affluent society (Internet 5). As part of this campaign, traditional Ainu motifs were and still are placed in busy passageways in Sapporo and the most important element of this campaign is a wooden statue of an Ainu man with a bow.

Ainu people have noticed a change in the attitude of society and of the authorities towards their culture. T. Kaizawa, a dancer from the Biratori folk group and a member of the Ainu Association of Hokkaido, states:

> "Twenty years ago, knowledge of Ainu culture was poor. Since that time there has been the UN convention on primeval inhabitants and it changed a lot. For 20 years, we have been speaking about the existence of the Ainu and their culture. The interest of local and central authorities has escalated. Meaningful changes have taken place especially in the last 10 years and I personally believe that, in comparison with the interest shown when I was a teenager, it is completely different".

The renaissance of Ainu culture is so noticeable and common that it is mentioned even by well-known tourist guides which present it as a kind of tourist attraction (Rowthorn 2013, 569). At first, only the Japanese used the tourist potential of Ainu culture. In the second half of the 20th century – even before "the Ainu renaissance" – the Ainu started to use their culture for commercial purposes[11]. The authorities gave their permission as they tended "to tolerate the Ainu only to an extent that assured income from Hokkaido tourism" (Majewicz 1991, 234). The Ainu tried to hand down the knowledge of their traditions to visitors but usually they did it to "attract tourists, to earn money" (Majewicz 1983, 21). It quickly turned out that the biggest profits from this developing tourism are drawn by Japanese companies and the Ainu still live in poverty[12].

In these times of globalization and overpowering unification ethnic minorities are threatened with extinction. A new, previously unknown phenomenon of grass-roots renaissance of small, endangered cultures has appeared as a reaction to this process. The formation of elite groups of ethnic minorities is a bid to save ancient traditions from oblivion. Groups reconstructing the old culture are starting to appear and assert their identity amidst a dominant group of people. In a way, the renaissance of each culture has to go back to its roots, however, a return to the traditional way of living should

---

[11] Previously, it was the Japanese who used the Ainu as a tourist attraction. Sieroszewski claims that Ainu people were exploited by some Japanese man. He took them to an exhibition in Osaka "where they were supposed to 'pretend' to be Ainu villagers and present 'the bear holiday' (Sieroszewski 1957, 26).

[12] I observed a similar phenomenon during my research conducted with J. Łapott amongst the Dogon (Mali) where the greatest profits were not drawn by Dogon people living in villages visited by tourists but by foreign tour operators. It rouses dissatisfaction among the Dogon and causes many misunderstandings.

not be expected. Kaizawa introduced the bow dance which he had seen in Sapporo to the group's repertoire. He says that

> "some women remember their grandmothers dancing the crane dance or they have seen it somewhere else. Nowadays, groups like this one try to reconstruct Ainu culture."

Life is changing and representatives of ethnic minorities want to live in the same way as members of majority groups. They do not want to be living fossils, walking museums. One of the interlocutors noticed that "museums are good for tourists, for autochthons it is a living, changing culture". Ainu culture evolved over centuries and changed due to the influence of Japanese culture. The modern Ainu way of living is the same as that of other inhabitants of Japan.

The Ainu will probably not go back to using the Ainu language, it is too late to reconstruct it. Japanese has become and probably will stay their native language. According to Nakamura, "even without the preservation of their language the Ainu people will not disappear, their identity will not disappear even when their language does". He is not the only person thinking this way, many interlocutors emphasize that "language is not the only element of culture, Ainu culture will exist without their language". They will cultivate traditions which will not restrict their contemporary, modern life. Folk groups will present old traditions of their ancestors despite the fact that they may be a bit commercial. A huge opportunity to become more prominent in Japanese society is through the promotion of Ainu art which is gladly bought by tourists. It is not just a meaningless imitation. There is a group of modern, recognized artists who are continuators of their forefathers' art[13]. Mainly thanks to their contribution it was possible to create "Ainu Design" which is a line or series of functional items decorated with traditional Ainu motifs (t-shirts, shirts, bags, handbags, wallets, trays, cup mats, tablecloth etc.).

CONCLUSIONS

During one of numerous meetings on Hokkaido there was a question to a young father with a Japanese wife, who was a member of a folk group. "What will your son be?" There was a very balanced answer.

> "Will my son be Ainu? It depends on my wife whether my son will be raised in Ainu culture. When he learns about his father's descent, then he will be and Ainu and Japanese. My son has a good relationship with Ainu culture, and he will choose himself whether he wants to be Ainu or / and Japanese. I want to encourage him, not to force him. Young people have a different approach to Ainu culture."

---

[13] Here we have the example of Kaizawa, who has a picture of his sculptor-grandfather in his studio from the beginning of the 20th century and he directly refers to his artistic works.

Will their interest in Ainu culture and their sense of belonging continue? How will future generations behave? Who will they consider themselves to be? To a great extent it depends on observation, if they will be proud of their ancestors' culture or if they will be ashamed of their Ainu origin. Will the Ainu limit themselves to only hanging *inaw* on their rear-view mirrors? Or will it be something more?

It is impossible to address all of the topics related to the renaissance of Ainu culture and identity in a short article. Undoubtedly, it is some kind of phenomenon worth researching continuously. This article only presents an outline of history showing the process of transformation starting with armed conflicts through assimilation processes (Japanization), acculturation, discrimination and finally the unexpected cultural renaissance. Differences in the interpretation of facts by scientists and Ainu people may constitute an interesting problem. Scientists carry out dispassionate analysis based on facts while Ainu people perceive their culture subjectively and emotionally. We are given the impression of an ongoing process rather than a realistic view of the situation.

English proofreader Richard Daniel Rogers

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A m s e l l e J.-L. 1999. Ethnies et espaces: pour une anthropologie topologique. In J.-L. Amsel and E. M'Bokolo (ed.), *Au coeur de l'ethnie: ethnie, tribalisme et État en Afrique*. Paris, 11–48.
B a t c h e l o r J. 1901. *The Ainu and Their Folk-Lore*. London.
B r a d l e y D. 2007. East and Southeast Asia. In: C. Moseley (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the world's endangered languages*. London, 349–424.
I z a r d M. 1985. *Gens du pouvoir, gens de la terre: les institutions politiques de l'ancien royaume du Yatenga* (*Bassin de la Volta Blanche*). Paris.
K a y a n o S. 2014. *Ainu tools*. Biratori.
M a j e w i c z A. F. 1983. *Dzieje i legendy Ajnów*. Warszawa.
M a j e w i c z A. F. 1984. *Ajnu. Lud, jego język i tradycja ustna*. Poznań.
M a j e w i c z A. F. 1991. *Dzieje i wierzenia Ajnów*. Poznań.
M a t s u s h i t a W. and K i m i N. 1978. *Ainu bunken mokuroku – wabunhen*. Sapporo.
n o a u t h o r. 2013. *Together with the Ainu. History and culture*. Sapporo.
P i ł s u d s k i B. 1913. Trąd wśród Gilaków i Ajnów. *Lud* 18, 79–91.
R a d l i ń s k i I. 1901. *Przeszłość w teraźniejszości*. Warszawa–Kraków.
R o w t h o r n C h. (ed.) 2013. *Japan*. Lonely Planet.
S i e r o s z e w s k i W. 1957. *Wśród kosmatych ludzi*. Warszawa.
T a k a k u r a S. 1966. Vanishing Ainu of North Japan. *Natural History* 75 (3), 16–25.
T o t m a n C. 2009. *Historia Japonii*. Kraków.
Z a w i s t o w i c z K. 1930. Bronisław Piłsudski. *Wiedza i życie* 5(1), 25–40.

Internet websites:
Internet 1: https://www.ethnologue.com/language/ain, access 01.09.2016.
Internet 2: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shigeru_Kayano, access 05.09.2016.

Internet 3: http://www.ainu-museum.or.jp/shop/book.html, access 13.09.2016.
Internet 4: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nibutani/Dam, access 13.09.2016.
Internet 5: http://www.irankarapte.com/img/english.pdf, access 13.09.2016.
Internet 6: http://joemonster.org/art/29123/_Usmiechniete_kobiety_Ajnu, access 12.05.2015.

Author's address:

Lucjan Buchalik, Ph.D.
Muzeum Miejskie w Żorach
ul. Muzealna 1/2, 44-240 Żory, POLAND
e-mail: lucjanbuchalik@muzeum.zory.pl

The Shiraoi Museum. Photo: L. Buchalik 2015.

B. Piłsudski Monument in Shiraoi. Photo: L. Buchalik 2015.

Traditional Ajnuan farm at the Biratori-Nibutani Museum. Photo: L. Buchalik 2015.

Ajnuan motifs in an underground passage in Sapporo. Photo: L. Buchalik 2015.

MOBILITY TOWARDS STABILITY:
NETWORK-MEDIATED ETHNOGRAPHY
OF SUCCESSFUL POLISH MIGRANTS IN DUBLIN

ŁUKASZ KACZMAREK

DEPARTMENT OF ETHNOLOGY AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY
ADAM MICKIEWICZ UNIVERSITY, POZNAŃ

Inspired by some findings in the areas of the anthropology of wellbeing and mobility, in this paper I wish to consider the non-dichotomous relationship between socio-spatial mobility and the life stability of Poles who have migrated to Ireland and are satisfied with their current status. I assume that the status that my research partners have obtained is satisfying for them because it enables them – and those they feel responsible for – to achieve further social mobility in a direction they want. In other words, they see mobility as a means of achieving successful stability, and such stability is a means to continue mobility, both social and spatial, if it is deemed necessary or preferred.

Since most of my research partners have settled in Dublin taking advantage of social networks created before migration and actively developed after, I have decided to follow in their footsteps in the form of 'network-mediated ethnography', to by using my existing network of family and friends to become acquainted with successful Polish migrants in Ireland, and to understand them and their experiences better. I complemented these attempts using means accessible to everyone – searching the Internet, doing fieldwork in in selected localities and hanging out with my research partners.

* * *

Inspirując się ustaleniami z zakresu antropologii dobrobytu i mobilności, w niniejszym artykule rozpatruję niedychotomiczny związek między społeczno-przestrzenną mobilnością a stabilnością życiową Polaków, którzy po migracji do Irlandii osiągnęli satysfakcjonujący ich obecnie status. Zakładam, iż ów status zadowala ich, gdyż umożliwia im i ich najbliższym, dalszą społeczną mobilność w pożądanym kierunku. Innymi słowy, praktykują oni mobilność ku swoistej pomyślnej stabilności, która z kolei prowadzi do dalszej mobilności, zarówno społecznej, jak przestrzennej, jeśli z różnych powodów uznają to za konieczne lub korzystne.

Ze względu na fakt, że większość moich partnerów badawczych, osiadając w Dublinie korzystało z sieci społecznych utworzonych przed migracją i rozwijanych później, zdecydowałem się pójść w ich ślady, praktykując *network-mediated ethnography*. Jest to metoda badań etnograficznych polegająca na wejściu etnografa w teren, używając własnych sieci krewnych i znajomych do wyszukiwania respondentów i lepszego rozumienia ich doświadczeń. W ten sposób odnajdywałem polskich migrantów, którym powodzi się w Irlandii. Uzupełniłem te zabiegi używając ogólnodostępnych środków – eksplorując Internet, wydeptując ścieżki w wybranych miejscach oraz spędzając czas w towarzystwie moich partnerów badawczych.

K e y w o r d s: social mobility, social and economic status, stability, achievement, success, wellbeing, network-mediated migration, network-mediated ethnography, migration, Polish migrants in Dublin.

Many forms of conscious social and spatial mobility are characterised by the desire to achieve, either individually or collectively, a certain socio-economic status which may be called stability. The representations of the status are not static – they are subject to modifications in the course of collecting personal experiences by individuals and their communities, as a result of the observation of practical endeavours and accompanying circumstances. Researchers are trying to capture certain similarities in specific social contexts between people, however each person evaluates their situation individually in reference to their own interpretations of social category-representations of success (and failure) in life which shape their aspirations and assessment of achievements (Fisher 2014, 5).

During my ethnological fieldwork in Dublin[1], I investigated the sentiments of people who left Poland after joining the European Union. They have stayed in Ireland having achieved, in their perspective, success. This allowed me to formulate a statement that what enables them to feel basic levels of satisfaction is achieving life stability ("standing on their own two feet"). This stability manifests itself in an emotional tranquillity accomplished as a result of their ability to provide legal and material security for themselves and/or their close relatives and associates. This is a consequence of the certainty of employment and accommodation and an ability to plan their future based on predictable access to material and financial resources. This situation is also partly brought because of the health and social care pension schemes which are seen as very secure and stabile, as is the case of my research partners in Ireland.

An important element of this sense of stability is also the ability to "enjoy life" realised in many different ways depending on personality or availability of local activities matching each person's individual preferences. A sense of satisfaction is significantly affected by having one's nearest and dearest in close proximity the close people – be they a partners and/or friends – with whom one can share one's life (see also Graham 2001, 13). This combination of elements determine the quality of self-evaluation of migrants, which directly translates into their ability to accept variable life situations in the host society.

In other words, stability on a level acceptable for a person (or family) allows them to think of realizing further professional and life aspirations. Determining whether the level of stability is sufficient and defining further life aspirations stem from individual feelings. And these are negotiable – especially when family is taken into account. Some people feel forced to abandon their personal aspirations for the sake of their family's happiness or the well-being of their children. However, it also commonly occurs that

some family members feel inspired to personal development because of these values. However, the majority of people among whom I carried out my research in Ireland, indicated that they remain in this country precisely because of their achieved stability and "tranquillity". It is also one of the reasons why they postpone their return to Poland or abandon it completely, at least for the foreseeable future.

In this context, a certain describable level of life stability allows people to fulfil their basic aspirations, translating into feelings of satisfaction from life and allows them to plan for the future. Therefore, from a bottom-up perspective, this kind of individual stability has become their point of evaluation reference and their own definition of socio-economic status. Notions of stability are the motivating n factor behind the deliberate taking of all forms of social and spatial mobility, such as for example learning and professional development, the desire to integrate within one's own or another society, as well as migrating for work (be it within one's own country or abroad), or indeed in search of a better place to live, to raise one's children and to spend one's free time – in short, to enhance one's social life. From a bottom-up perspective, if the phenomena and social processes taking place are looked at in the modern world where aspirations are shaped on the basis of an increasingly common and global public culture, the reasons behind the majority of migration cases – both domestic and international – are more understandable. Bearing all of this in mind, it is to be supposed that for the majority of people mobility is a means of achieving life stability. It is also the expression of an individual and collective pursuit of happiness, or at least the improvement of one's material situation, which, in turn, is often related to concern for loved ones.

This article results from the first stage of my field work, conducted in the summer of 2015, in Dublin. The majority of people I interacted with in the course of my research left Poland after 2004, soon after Polish citizens were exempted from the obligation of possessing a work permit to be able to work in Ireland. The purpose of this research is to understand beliefs regarding people's sense of success achieved when living abroad. Therefore, in this article I wish to focus on a number of chosen individuals, whose transnational lives will allow their success to be seen relativistically taking into account the subjective perception of satisfaction as experienced by the research partners[2] and the variety of factors influencing their reasons for experiencing it.

Many Poles who went to Ireland in order to find employment, in the beginning arrived just "to see how it would go", and in the majority of cases they had the safety net of knowing that they could return home. Their first migration experiences might thus be referred to as "labour tourism" which lasted from a few weeks to a few months – in the sense of as long as it was affordable. Many of these "labour tourists" who found

---

[2] Names of all research partners have been changed. In each of the stories, certain details were omitted or added from other biographies so that the described story still has currency but I felt it was important to maintain anonymity.

satisfying working and living conditions (livelihood), often returned to Poland, despite their positive experiences. However, later on when confronted with the realities of Polish working conditions and when they were compared to the conditions pertaining in Ireland, this resulted in definite decisions being taken to emigrate (see also Nowicka 2014). Many people, after an initial trial period in Ireland, returned to Poland to sort their situations out and prepare for emigration, very often with their families in tow. A relatively small number of Poles whom I met left their country with the aim of permanently settling in Ireland. The trip was meant to be a quick fix for their financial situation or sometimes only a means of enhancing their English language skills. The majority of people, after their period of "labour tourism", were planning to work in Ireland for a number of years in order to achieve a certain level which in their context could be understood as "a measurement of success", and then planned to return to Poland. However, the majority of my research partners have prolonged their stay in Ireland and they are unable to state definitively whether they might one day return to their home country.

This is related to the fact that the majority of this group have spent most of their professional lives in Ireland. Their return to Poland, in a professional context, in a sense would mean emigrating anew to a no longer known environment, of which they do not think very highly of judging from prior experiences. The stories they hear from friends and relatives who have remained in Poland do not encourage return. Among the people I met in Dublin, who after an initial period of "labour tourism" returned to Poland and then came back to Ireland, most described the Polish job market as "horrific" and their stay in Poland as a failure.

When taking their first steps in Ireland, Polish migrants followed a scheme referred to by Tamar Wilson as network-mediated migration. She wrote that many migrants "seek work first one place, then another, where they have kin and friends" (Wilson 1994, 272) which in many cases makes it easier for them to overcome their initial difficulties and often enables them to apply certain modifications to their target place of migration choice, without limiting this choice to only just one location. As a result, I decided to conduct my own field research and do some reconnaissance work by using my own network of relatives and friends who had left for Ireland.

Undergoing a migration network-mediated ethnography study among Poles who have succeeded in Ireland is particularly easy for researchers of my generation. This is due to the fact that the majority of these people were born in the 1970s or 1980s and left Poland after being educated after having reached the cusp of their independent adult lives. If a representative of this generation does not have any migration experience, it is highly probable that this person or one of their relatives or friends will know someone who has left, especially to countries where English is widely used. Since such a network was available to me I decided to avail myself of it in order to conduct a network-mediated ethnography project in Dublin.

IZA AND WOJTEK

Despite having mutual close friends in Poznań, I met Iza only a few months prior to my departure for Ireland. She came over to visit a mutual friend as they have been friends since their early school years when they both grew up in a small Wielkopolska Province town. Wojtek, who comes from a locality near Poznań, was met in Dublin. When they found out about my ethnographic research in their city, they invited me to stay with them for a number of weeks and I duly took up their offer with my family. This afforded me a fantastic opportunity and our relationship took on a new footing, far from that of researcher and subject. We lived together, spent our free time together and our children played together. We visited their friends, who also gladly shared their experiences and reflections as they tried to be helpful in assisting me to realize my research objectives. They also provided invaluable comments on what they believed to be some interesting aspects and situations in regards to the presence of migrants in Ireland and what had influenced them.

Iza was the first to arrive in Ireland, in 2003. At the beginning she just wanted to improve her English and maybe earn some money. She had a number of menial jobs (cleaner and waitress). She and Wojtek were unmarried and childless at this point (their daughter was born later in Ireland). The financial situation of her family was good so she did not have to remit any money to Poland. During her first stay in the Emerald Isle she managed to save enough money to pay her own contribution to her 30-year – mortgage for a flat in Poland, which she had obtained from a bank with her parents acting as guarantors. Over a year later she returned to Poland but found it difficult to re-adapt to the local job market. Before completing her studies she worked in a courier company, where she met Wojtek, also a student. She worked in the office and he delivered packages. Upon her return to Poland in 2005, she tried to find some stable employment with the hope of completing her university studies and paying off her mortgage without needing the assistance of her parents, as they were realizing their own dreams by building a house. She managed to obtain a relatively well-paid position in local terms, but the income she earned from the acquisition of this office job for a person with a good command of English did not allow her to achieve as comfortable a financial level as she had had in Ireland (essentially earning the local minimal wage). Moreover, her boss in Poland was very clear in implying that "he who pays the piper calls the tune", expecting unpaid overtime work and creating an atmosphere of psychological stress. He stoked the rivalry between employees and increased uncertainty over further employment. All attempts to discuss, negotiate or refuse were met with a phrase so well-known in Poland: "if you don't like it here, leave as there are a list of others who will gladly take this job".

Iza could not afford to lose her job, as she had her mortgage to pay while at the same time she could not look for other work as actively as she would have wanted to

since her current position consumed too much time and energy. All the offers that she did receive failed to come up to her financial needs. After a number of months she realised she had stopped frequenting the cinema with her friends, partying and that she was too scared to start a family, as becoming pregnant could potentially lose her employer's good graces and that this could eventually cost her the job. Wojtek, in the meantime, continued studying and working as a courier. He did not have any significant family or financial commitments and had time to entertain himself to "enjoy his youth" and have a healthy social life. All however was not bright on the horizon. One day Iza left, packing her suitcases and went back to Ireland, where a friend from her first stay helped her to obtain a job as a cleaner at the university hospital in Dublin. For this lowly-paid menial night shift job, five times a week, she earned a monthly salary almost twice as much as in Poland – employed in an office in a big city. She was easily able to meet her mortgage repayments in Poland for a flat she rented out which resulted in her being able to abstract herself from a stressful employer and finally have some time for herself.

Wojtek joined her after six months and he came, successfully as it turned out, to keep their relationship afloat. He started working at the same place and position as Iza and they moved in together. He instantly started earning about four times as much as he was in Poland. In the meantime, on the hospital notice board Iza found a month-long offer of work looking after a bedridden person during his stay abroad. No special qualifications were required and all that was needed of the carer was patience and kindness. Iza was tired of working night shifts so she decided to take up the new challenge. In doing so, she took time off from the hospital. The person she looked after become very fond of her and after a while recommended her as an unqualified help to his friend, who was a dentist. At the beginning, the dentist did not pay her as much as she was earning in the hospital, but he taught her the basics of dental care. Iza liked her new job and enrolled on a series of vocational courses. It allowed her to garner her first professional qualifications and enabled her to obtain a much better paid job for another Irish dentist. She has continued attending vocational courses and now she has become the chief medical assistant in the private dental clinic of her employer.

Wojtek still works as a cleaner at a hospital, but now that Iza, after nine years of working and studying, has achieved a satisfying position, he is also looking to advance his career prospects. Wojtek feels satisfaction from the fact that by working hard (he has become the supervisor of the hospital cleaning team) he has helped to provide a psychological and financial comfort which has allowed Iza to risk changing jobs and investing some of their earnings in her vocational courses. When four years ago their daughter was born they decided to get married. A growing sense of material security allowed them to make the decision to move from a cheap rented working class terraced house in The Liberties into a nice apartment in a 'more refined area' which they found thanks to the assistance of their Irish associates. They still own the mortgaged flat in

Poland but no other property. Due to their constant expenditure on their payments, rent, utility bills, and kindergarten as well as investing in their own development, they have delayed the decision to purchase a car, even though most of their friends have one, and many are buying apartments or houses in Ireland. They prefer to put money aside to invest in their children's education and they believe their situation will keep improving, and if problems crop up then they have the security blanket of being always able to sell their flat in Poland.

GOSIA

I met Gosia through the old fashioned method of simply asking around. I was told by an Irish friend that at one of the universities he had noticed quite a number of Polish employees, working at various levels of administration and hospitality services, but also among the academic staff. So I went there and I came across Agata, who helped me to make contact with her Polish colleagues. Needless to say, I had conducted a little prior homework on the university. However, it was my "strolling ethnography" which allowed me to determine that administrative work and services are characterised by a constant re-organisation of the university structure, meant to reduce costs, increase revenue, open up new markets and score higher international ratings. This causes frequent changes involving transfers of employees from one department to another, a growing number of services being outsourced, reductions in the number of permanent staff, increased responsibilities for individual positions and departments and also the creation of new structures to realize new projects internationally.

The vast majority of Poles I met at the university have benefitted, at least temporarily, from these continuous changes. They are ready for new challenges, have degrees (most), are accustomed to facing the everyday life situations and communicating in a foreign language, which has forced them to hone their English language skills. In addition, they had to learn professions they were not prepared for nor taught at Polish universities; had to climb the "migrant career ladder" (starting from the menial and graduating to white collar office work) with all roads leading eventually to them being afforded the opportunity to work at university. They had to acquire new skills and combine these with ones they had gained before. They have also learned to appreciate work which gives them a relatively moderate but stable source of income allowing them to live in peace and have enough free time. With this in place, the university employees from Poland working in administration or services whom I met, agreed to frequent changes in their responsibilities, and even, in some cases, to being transferred to external companies which were contracted as outsource service providers. Even if in some cases they might have lost out financially from the change, they kept the continuity of employment and good recommendations, which sometimes came in handy

when further re-organisation of university structures occurred and new positions with more responsibilities became available.

As programme administrator and area manager, Gosia has achieved the highest rank of all non-academic Polish staff in the university. Gosia comes from a large city in the south of Poland. She and her boyfriend came over to Dublin for the first time in 2002, to earn some money while still students. She got a well-paid job as a barmaid in one of the hotels. She even he invited a number of her friends to come to Ireland. Despite this, she decided to go back to Poland to finish a degree in tourism, which was her great passion as she was also a mountain guide. In 2003, she gave birth to a son, and enrolled for a postgraduate diploma in Public Relations. When her son was 2 years old, she decided to return to Ireland. This was not for economic reasons, but she wanted to distance herself from the pressure her family was imposing on her regarding the fact that she decided to raise her son herself, and their attempts to impose their way of life, on both a professional and private basis on her.

After coming back to Dublin she stayed with one of the friends she had formerly invited to Ireland. She quickly found a job allowing her to pay rent and play school. Within a relatively short period of time, in 2006, she had acquired her first university job, a position in administration, of low rank. She says that she has never been overly ambitious, but she clearly has an idea of what a "good job" means to her. This is why she has always tried to perform her duties scrupulously, and, as she says:

> "There has never been too much work not to be able to manage it, on the contrary, there is not much work at all and quite a large group of people spend their days on Facebook; but I don't like being idle, so always when I had an opportunity, I was helping others or proposed some improvements or new ideas, for example, video presentations of our staff is my success, we didn't have it before. It is clear here that once you have an idea, you will be heard «you have a great idea, so you do it» but for me it's never been a problem, I just really like it when there is something going on, and I can spend my time being useful".

She also adds:

> "What I would call my success, but to be perfectly honest I don't think my job falls into the category of success stories, so I believe my success is the fact that until now most of my promotions at work I received not by going out for a pint with bosses or being a toady (there are a few people like that), but because someone noticed and appreciated my work. Surely, I was vying for promotions and applied for different positions at university on multiple occasions, for example there was one position I applied for 4 years in a row – without success. However, at this moment I am working at an even better position, although not at the school I wanted to get transferred to".

Gosia is serious in her explanations, however when she talks about her "luck" and how she obtained her current job, she smiles a little. She repeatedly emphasizes that she does not consider the arc of her career or her life as "typical" at any level ("I'm probably no use for your research as I don't fit into any standards"). She is relatively

satisfied with her salary, however she emphasises that ,in her opinion, she differs from the norm because she does not save any money, the majority of which is used to cover the cost of living, rent and the private education of her son. She has never had to remit any money back to Poland and she seems to have a relaxed approach to her administration position at the university. She is very critical towards what she calls the "official" optimism and "the propaganda of success" inherent in the business school where she works. She also mentions, something common among the academic staff of the school, a snobbery which manifests itself in the need to highlight the scale of each person's achievements (these reflections were in response to comments I made in terms of problems arising in defining success).

Gosia lives nearby the university, rents a flat and does not own a car. The prices of properties in the area are horrendously high and she forks out around 1200 euro a month on rent. From her point of view, despite the fact she would be paying less for her own place in terms of mortgage and bills, it is the close proximity to her workplace and her son's school that make it ideal. Gosia does not go out much in her free time, because her old circle of friends has fallen apart, nor does she go out to indulge in her tourist hobby ("there isn't really anyone to do it with").

ASIA AND JERRY

Asia and Jerry hosted me during the very last weeks of my stay in Dublin. They live in a rented apartment in a new estate located about 15 km to the south of the city centre. From their house you can conveniently reach the centre thanks to a newly built tram line called the DART and Dublin bypasses. It is also close to an area called Tallagh, which due to the preferential apartment prices on offer is very often chosen by newcomers.

Asia is my friend's cousin and as kids they spent summers together in Asia's home town, a small village located in the south-east of the Wielkopolska region. After finishing her secondary education she worked in different jobs in her locality, where the majority of companies not in the agriculture sector belonged to one owner. Having passed her "matura" (secondary education certificate) exam, Asia commuted to Poznań to study with thoughts of a course that would provide her with vocational training, with which she could find employment in her home area or one of the nearby towns. She graduated from a 3-year- cosmetology course and returned to her catering job in her hometown. She was resistant to the idea of going to Ireland – she learned not to expect much from life and the job she had was enough to meet her needs. Her older siblings became independent and moved out, so she lived with her parents contributing to household expenses. Similar to a great number of people I met in Dublin, she came to Ireland "to see how it goes", to visit her friends who had made the decision

to go earlier and now were able to help her out with finding her first job and accommodation. Many of these "labour tourists" returned to Poland after a period of time or moved to other countries to find work. Asia took some time to find her feet in Ireland as she felt she had difficulties communicating in English and for a long time she could not find a job. She felt useless and a burden on her friends, where she was staying and who were trying to help her out. She was just about to return to Poland, but a day before she received the offer of a trial period at McDonald's. She gave herself one last chance, mainly in order not to view her stay to have been a total failure and also to earn some money, to pay off the loan she had taken to be able to come to Ireland and to recoup some of the outlay she had spent after a work free month. She returned her flight ticket and went on trial, eventually working at McDonald's for 5 years. During that time she met new people, made friends and learned to communicate effectively in English (largely thanks to sharing a flat with an Irish national). After some time and with the backing of good references she changed jobs for a more demanding one at a company providing catering services for a number of universities in Ireland. In this new job she was promoted several times and has now become a manager of a canteen in Dublin.

She met her current partner, Jerry, who works in the same industry as an economist. They have lived together for a number of years now supporting each other. Asia helped Jerry recover from a difficult divorce and he describes her as a very practical person, who is not overly ambitious and focused on the future, but she makes the most of the opportunities which present themselves without having to resort to taking out loans or credits that would take years to pay off with the intention of "showing off", to prove that one is successful. I perceived this to be some sort of critique of the modern world and the phase of life Jerry went through previously. Jerry thinks about the future but he cares more about ensuring that his children from his previous marriage have "a cool childhood and a good degree", without falling into the trap of workaholism, which he relates to his previous struggles to prove his success at every level. In relation to this he mentioned living in an expensive house in a good area, having a new high-class car, following the newest trends and frequenting expensive restaurants.

These days together with Asia they have a very active life after work and his children are frequent participators. They both have reasonably well-paid positions so money is not their biggest concern as long as they maintain employment. They chose to rent a comfortable apartment in an area where prices are not very high and where they have easy access to parks and forests and a convenient commute to their children's schools and their workplaces. Jerry did not want to repeat some of his earlier mistakes in regards to an expensively-mortgaged house, located in an area that could only be reached by car and where despite living in close proximity to the city, it was impossible to spontaneously and conveniently go out with friends, go to a cinema or to a pub. Jerry has now more opportunities to meet his old friends, spend some quality time

with his children (often outdoors), and visit his and Asia's friends. Together with Asia he indulges in sports, such as going for long-distance runs, and triathlons.

LITTLE STABILITY

The situations described are standard stories that can be witnessed every day in big multicultural cities. They show that these situations a cannot be solely reduced to economic, social and cultural factors . These migrants, the protagonists of my research, could have made completely different life choices by staying in their hometowns, moving elsewhere or indeed never leaving their native country. In their cases, the factor that influenced their decision to emigrate was mobility understood as "the possibility and ability to move", together with a lack of social or administrative obstacles for such mobility. Because of the removal of visa and work permit requirements they were in a position to visit Ireland and work there for a trial period. Only later, having garnered that initial experience, could they then make informed decisions about going back to their country or trying to make a living in Ireland and planting permanent roots. Their decisions were based on their empirical and practical knowledge of what could be expected from life in Ireland.

Another characteristic held in common with a majority of my other research partners and the protagonists of these stories is that it is more important for them to have the opportunity to integrate with their host society rather than just with other Poles living in Ireland. Migration network of friends or relatives from Poland serving as intermediaries was especially important upon arrival, at the beginning of the familiarization process and in dealing with the otherness of the new environment. Later, however, each of the described persons made independent, individual decisions, translating into their professional situation depending on how they functioned in their local working environments and societies. This does not necessitate their breaking off from their Polishness or those the Poles, with whom the people described here have contact with at work and in their social life. This contact can provide them with a break from routine an opportunity to speak Polish and sometimes to ensure that their children maintain contact with the Polish culture at different institutions or during organised events.

The described examples present Poles who feel comfortable in a big Irish city and enjoy its diversity. The people described do not socialize excessively with any specific social group. Their close relationships are limited to the people they have met at different junctures of their life, most commonly related to their professional life or their place of abode in Ireland. Most of my research partners also have families and friends in Poland, whom they try to visit as often as possible and make efforts to keep in touch but, as many of them commented, as time passes it becomes more and more difficult to maintain contact, as lives change and evolve differently.

The sense of stability is most of my research partners have in common, both those who settled in Ireland and declare to be content with their situation, and those who now live in Ireland but still would like to return to Poland. They believe that Ireland provides them with stability in the form of relative predictability of livelihood expenses, income, savings and accommodation. They can afford more than they could in Poland, and are convinced that "in Ireland [people] know how to appreciate a normal job". Subjective appreciation of stability also shows in which circumstances we agree or not agree to the level of professional status assigned to us. The majority of Poles believe that if they were born in Ireland, with similar education levels and acquired skills, they would be more likely to hold higher positions and earn better salaries. They also relate it to their assumption that in Poland with the same qualifications they might hold higher positions but to earn as much as they do in Ireland they would be forced to work much harder and in much more difficult working conditions. These comparisons and relativity allow them to focus their aspirations outside of their professional life, by searching for success in family and financial security, in reference to the people who have stayed in Poland and based on building a sense of having achieved in life.

CONCLUSION

It is equally difficult to discuss spatial mobility without any reference to locality – not only to travel conditions but also visited places, especially those where roots are set, and spaces where peoples identities are formed such as their places of origin and destination (see: Marcus 2004, 126; Dahinden 2010, 51) – as it is to discuss social mobility without reflecting on what it provides for the people who can be characterised by it. My research partners often describe their life in categories of completed stages, " little stabilisations" and certain personal achievements. Not many of them who, in their opinion, are successful, relate this notion to just one sphere of life. They prefer talking about the satisfaction brought by certain moments or periods, and that "you have to enjoy the good things" and "look at yourself from a different perspective". In this context, discussing mobility as a means of achieving stability or a certain level of life, does not exclude the pursuit of social advancement. Therefore mobility through stability is being dealt with , in a context in which both of these notions, mobility and stability do not carry contradictory meanings but actually complement each other.

The Poles migrating to Ireland have taken up many different jobs therefore it is impossible to uniformly categorize them, be it professional or social. What is more, their migration direction and their activities, jobs and accommodation, especially in their migrations early stages were mainly influenced by their networks formed in Poland. This can be referred to, after Tamar Wilson, as a *network-mediated chain migration* (1994, 272). My research was conducted predominantly among relatively well

educated people who come from different local and social environments in Poland. It is therefore difficult to point out one specific social place they would fit into or one they have created after their arrival , especially since the professions many are in are not an immediate result of the education they received in their home country. However, based on my fieldwork results, it can be stated, with caution, that successful Poles can be considered to be those people who left not in order to pursue amazing careers but in search for "normality", understood as achieving a position in which it is possible to live a tranquil, decent life based on diligent but not back-breaking work. These people have never tried to "blend in" or assimilate at all costs into Irish society; however, they want to be able to figure out what opportunities are available and to take advantage of them in order to have a good job in an environment of freedom and equality, as at least is entailed by European Union legislation (Pawlak 2015, 27).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

B r e t t e l l C. B. 2000. Theorizing migration in anthropology: The social construction of networks, identities, communities and globalscapes. In C.B. Brettell and J.F. Hollifield (eds.), *Migration Theory*. London, 97–135.

D a h i n d e n J. 2010. The dynamics of migrants' transnational formations: Between mobility and locality. In R. Bauböck and T. Faist (eds.), *Diaspora and Transnationalism: Concepts, Theories and Methods*. IMISCOE Research. Amsterdam, 51–71.

F i s c h e r E. F. 2014. *The Good Life: Aspiration, Dignity, and the Anthropology of Wellbeing*. Stanford.

G r a h a m C. 2011. *The Pursuit of Happiness: An Economy of Well-Being*. Washington D.C.

K e a r n e y M. 1995. The Local and the Global: The Anthropology of Globalization and Transnationalism. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24, 547–565.

M a r c u s G. 2004. *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin*. Princeton.

N o w i c k a M. 2014. Erfolgsnarrationen polnischer Migrantinnen und Migranten in Großbritannien oder: Wie Scheitern unsichtbar wird. In R. John and A. Langhof (eds.), *Scheitern – Ein Desiderat der Moderne?* Wiesbaden, 143–165.

P a w l a k M. 2015. Othering the Self: National Identity and Social Class in Mobile Lives. In H. Cervinkova, M. Buchowski, Z. Uherek (eds.), *Rethinking Ethnography in Central Europe*. New York.

W i l s o n T. 1994. What Determines Where Transnational Labour Migrants Go? Modifications in Migration Theories. *Human Organization* 53 (3 Fall), 269–278.

Author's address:

Łukasz Kaczmarek, Ph.D.
Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology
Adam Mickiewicz University
Collegium Historicum
ul. Umultowska 89 D
61-614 Poznań, POLAND
e-mail: l ukaszk@amu.edu.pl

BETWEEN RITUAL SLAUGHTER
AND A SACRED COW

MAGDALENA KRYSIŃSKA-KAŁUŻNA

AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER – CESLA
UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW

This article deals with relations between the established law and ethical values resulting from tradition in a culturally changing reality. In a world where more and more people are living in multicultural environments, the key element of social consensus is the relationship between values that are important for particular ethnic and religious groups and the law established in public society. Culture is a factor shaping the legal system as well as controlling behaviors assessed normatively and often diversely in different religious or ethnic groups. This text presents some theoretical approaches to the concept of law and the culture that builds it. The author indicates which of them are the closest to reaching a social consensus. The analyzed issue in this article is illustrated through the problem of differing approaches to animals and their slaughter and through the statements of both rabbi and imam religious leaders of communities engaged in ritual slaughter, living in Poland.

* * *

Artykuł dotyczy relacji zachodzących między ustanawianym prawem a wartościami etycznymi wynikającymi z tradycji w zmieniającej się kulturowo rzeczywistości. W świecie, w którym coraz więcej ludzi żyje w środowiskach multikulturowych, kluczowym elementem społecznego konsensusu jest relacja między wartościami istotnymi dla poszczególnych grup etnicznych i religijnych a prawem ustanawianym w społeczeństwem obywatelskim. Kultura jest tutaj czynnikiem zarówno kształtującym system prawny, jak i kontrolującym zachowania oceniane normatywnie, często odmiennie w różnych grupach religijnych czy etnicznych. W tekście prezentowane są różne podejścia teoretyczne do koncepcji prawa i budującej go kultury. Autorka wskazuje, które z nich najbardziej zbliżają do osiągnięcia konsensusu społecznego. Ilustracją analizowanego zagadnienia w niniejszym artykule jest problem podejścia do zwierząt i ich uboju oraz wypowiedzi liderów społeczności religijnych stosujących ubój rytualny – rabina i imama, mieszkających w Polsce.

K e y w o r d s: animal well-being, ritual slaughter, legal system, normative values, normative consensus / conflict, culture.

In the present day, clashes and conflicts between varying legal norms reflecting distinct systems of values are of increasing significance and frequency. Examples of these are the cultural norms governing pro-animal welfare organizations which demand the prohibition of the ritual slaughter of animals, and the rules of certain religious

minorities insistent on their right to such slaughter who base their argument along the lines of religious freedom. Another example is groups demanding that freedom of speech be accepted as the highest guiding principle in a democratic society, while some minorities perceive this as a threat to their most fundamental values.

These types of conflicts will occur with increasing frequency in multicultural societies, in which each group argues that the specific aspects of their individual identities should be widely respected and accepted. However, these same aspects can be perceived – with regards to other cultural or minority groups – as a threat.

When there is no possibility of achieving an understanding concerning the precedence of specific norms and values, it seems that the law is becoming the arena for negotiation, allowing for the determination of certain rules acceptable to all parties. In order for the postulated dialogue concerning cultural laws which does not simultaneously recognize any "meta-language" concerning norms and values to come into being and make sense, an appropriate way of perceiving both law and culture must be found. Such a perception assumes, amongst other, that a local law or a set of legal standards is a part of culture and that it shapes culture to a significant degree.

Among a number of competing theories (functioning in the realm of Western thought) which would explain the formation of a legal system are the natural theories of law, based on the claim that human laws work until they do not come into conflict with superior laws of the divine variety. The role of the legislator is only to use them (Sarkowicz and Stelmach 1996, 18). The next theory is clearly linked to the concept of instrumental rationality, which began to function in the 19th century. It also assumed that the order presented in the world which surrounds us is brought to light through law, but the order is that of nature. In this approach, rationality is a value in and of itself, while the legislator "usually by himself/ herself, without the participation of society, implements the particular stages of the legislative process and 'authoritatively' steers society" (Sarkowicz and Stelmach 1996, 120, my translation). In the contemporarily dominant concepts of the theory of law, instrumental perception of rationality is being ousted by, among others, the idea of argumentative or consensual rationality. The former – based on the conviction that the most important task within social life is achieving social acceptance for particular laws and rules – signifies that a rational legislator is not necessarily one who presents the truth of the knowledge on which a normative agreement is based, or one who proves its effectiveness in achieving the objective, but rather one whose argumentation effectively shapes the attitudes of the norms' addressees. Consensual rationality, on the other hand, is based on the Habermasian communicative vision of society. In accordance with this concept, the most significant human actions are those which are aimed at achieving social consensus. The necessary condition for this to be achieved is action based on intersubjective acceptance of social norms (Sarkowicz and Stelmach 1996, 120; also see: Krysińska-Kałużna 1999). It is precisely this last concept, based on consensual rationality which provides hope

of an understanding being reached in regard to laws resulting from cultural differences and in situations in which the laws are mutually exclusive.

As already mentioned, in order for dialogue to occur, not only must the law but also the culture be perceived in the appropriate way. Certain aspects of this very complex and ambiguously definable phenomenon must be emphasized. These can be accepted as analytical assumptions which enable culture to be perceived as a type of process which is linked to constant change, but also – in its manifestations – culture is sometimes threatened with annihilation.

As Fredrik Barth points out, in order to understand "how the complex category of culture is in fact used as an analytical concept", one should search for "a prototype or central member within the category" (Barth 2002, 26), and thus find a pattern according to which culture (for example: "culture is custom")[1]. Care should also be taken to not commit the mistake of reducing "culture" to some of its aspects or features (Barth 2002, 27). "It is extremely common for people to take one well-understood or easy-to-perceive aspect of something and use it to stand for the thing as a whole or for some other aspect or part of it" (Lakoff 1989, 77). Cultures could be assumed to possess certain features or elements which are common to all of them and of which radical change could cause their decline. These could be such elements as: language, the system of beliefs/myths or the social system. However, this type of thinking would draw people into the trap of essentialism[2]. This can be avoided through using Ludwig Wittgenstein's concept of "family resemblance" (Wittgenstein 2000, 51). In accordance with this theory, there does not have to be a single common defining quality for all of the categories designated by one term, but a "network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing" (quoted after: Glock 2001, 251). This means that for the designation of the meaning of a name, the condition that "the designates of this term have a set of common essential features" (Woleński 1983, 15, my translation) is not necessary. In this same way, for designating the meaning of "the core of culture" which is the part that decides its essence, it is not indispensable for it to always consist of the same elements. The concept of "family resemblance" can be applied here – features such as language, religion, the social system, mythology, customs and rites may belong to what can be called "the core of a given culture", but not all of these features must necessarily be included into it (also see: Wittgenstein 2000, 50–51; Fox 1987). In other words, one cannot assume that in

---

[1] As an example of the analysis of changes taking place in culture on the basis of research of the decline of select elements (or their duration) in technical and practically useable fields or in the sphere of values, see (respectively): Smith 1955 and Van der Kroef 1959.

[2] This is a view which claims that "all cases which fall under a given term must have something in common, something which explains why they are subject to this term, and that the only suitable or correct explanation of the word is an analytical definition, which establishes the necessary and sufficient conditions of its usage; as a result, explanations which refer to examples are not enough" (Glock 2001, 250, my translation).

order to introduce radical cultural change or the decline of a culture or its annihilation, it is always necessary to modify the same set of cultural elements[3]. In other words, if it is assumed that each culture has its own "set" of elements which are part of its "core", then it can also be assumed that not all of these cultural elements are equally important for its survival. If this situation is looked at from the perspective of the legislator who uses consensual rationality, it could be hoped that this possibility of acknowledging that some elements of culture are less important than others would create an opportunity for reaching an understanding in the case of cultural laws which are mutually exclusive. The conflict between certain cultural customs and human rights, seen as a significant element of another culture, may serve as an example of such a situation.

This suggests the increasing relevance of the role of legal anthropology, which analyses individual cases of enforcing the law, especially with regards to traditional laws, and studies conflicts between distinct cultural legal systems, as well as participating in the debate regarding the possibility of the coexistence of various legal norms, based on distinct culturally-determined legal traditions, within the same society.

The anthropological debate between the relativism and universalism of human rights has helped form a third approach – a pluralistic one. On a certain level, this is also a relativistic approach which does not accept that the 'Western' universalist concept of human rights. This approach focuses solely on individual rights and claims that they are supra-cultural and the only 'correct' concept. However, this approach is not a research concept – as in the case of cultural relativism in the field of anthropology – but a concept regarding the formation of a specific legal system, such as human rights. It is therefore a "lawmakers' approach", utilizing – in my opinion – methods and means suggested by consensual rationality, the starting point of which remains the 'Western' concept of human rights.

In accordance with the pluralistic approach, the sources of human rights which were formulated in the past – and continue to be formulated now – should be searched for in different cultures and traditions, including the socialist tradition. This approach supports assumptions concerning the interdependency of economic, social and cultural laws as well as civil and political laws, attempting to merge the traditions of the 'East' with the 'West'. A similar interdependency exists between the rights of individuals and collective rights, such as the rights of cultural groups. Many group demands may be in conflict with the rights of individuals guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The decision concerning which of these rights has precedence should be – in accordance with a pluralistic approach – considered case by case. Through such

---

3 This issue is discussed by, for example, Iwona Stoińska-Kairska: "It is obvious that one of the elements of the culture or every group is its language (...). It should be mentioned that there are cases in which the culture of a given group ceased to function while its language still exists, and vice versa, though much less frequent, in which the element which ceased to function was the language, while the culture managed to survive" (Stoińska-Kairska 2002, 31, my translation).

means, it has been, for example, stated – on the basis of ethnohistoric research – that female genital mutilation in African societies and the unequal access to land or food are not significant for the survival of a cultural community (Messer 1997; Krysinska-Kałużna 1999). In a text, considered by some researchers to be the manifesto of the new approach taken by anthropologists towards human rights issues and seen as being historically significant (Goodale 2006, 488), Ellen Messer writes:

> "Indianist researchers examining the sources and consequences of women's lower food intakes relative to males, recommend the following analytic approach when cultural ideologies about women produce abuses of basic rights as seen from a Western perspective. The first step is to identify the actual behaviors by which women get less of available resources and to evaluate the material consequences (undernutrition, ill health, excess deaths, and skewed survivorship) that results of such conditions of discrimination. The next step is to examine the ideas behind such behaviors – whether expressed in terms of unequal or lower relative value of women or in terms of the resources somehow being 'bad' for women or that they can tolerate and thrive on less. These steps allow measurement in both local cultural and scientific terms of whether a basic right is being fulfilled and of the possible multiple layers of causation. The same analytic approach can be used to describe deprivation of other groups such as refugees or very young children" (Messer 1993, 233).

She makes similar claims concerning the custom of female genital modification (FGM) among the Kikuyu people and her claims are supported by ethnohistoric research. Susan Pedersen, in a text about the relations between British colonial politics and the approach of the colonial authorities towards sexuality, shows that it was the actions of the colonial authorities aimed at subordinating the Kikuyu which strengthened the position of the FGM custom in terms of being an expression of identification with tribal culture and opposition to the colonial authorities.

> "But if the missionaries were quite wrong in their contention that, prior to 1929, clitoridectomy was an atavistic custom in terminal decline, several careful historical studies have substantiated their claim that the proto-nationalists of the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) found the missionaries' censure of the practice a useful catalyst for organization and resistance. The intervention of the KCA catapulted the controversy into the category of a full-scale political revolt and endowed the practice itself with new meaning" (Pedersen 1991, 651).

Such a pragmatic approach which investigates whether a given feature is significant for cultural identity or whether it lies in the interests of some faction of a given community, elicits the criticism of anti-relativists and opponents of collective rights. The latter believe that cultural identity should be protected through the strengthening of civil and political laws, and not through the difficult to define "rights to cultural identity". The fear that the "multiplication of human rights" (for the needs of this article defined as rights which are part of a particular culture) may lead to the weakening of these rights seems justified, as many groups may declare themselves to be "peoples" which in turn may lead to them putting forward their demands. There are also obvious

doubts arising from questions who is to decide which customs are important for the survival of a given culture and how this decision is to be reached. Collective rights may be widely accepted, but they also "remain open to wide interpretation of measures of fulfillment and who qualifies as a 'person' eligible for protection" (Messer 1997, 305).

This last issue, is connected to who is 'entitled' to protection in particular cultures and is one of the most significant problems which needs to be solved in terms of the pluralistic approach (Messer 1993; Messer 1997). The role of an anthropologist who studies, compares and analyzes specific cultural concepts should be the enabling of a 'multicultural perspective', which would contribute to achieving an understanding of who in different cultures is deprived of privileges (rights) and why. The anthropologist's work would serve not so much as theoretical considerations, but rather instead aim at the enactment of specific actions, such as deciding on the division of food, as well as the creation of 'effective educational material' concerning human rights – as in the case described by Ellen Messer. A pluralistic approach assumes that only the acceptance and achievement of an understanding of these rights by all layers of society can guarantee their effectiveness. It can be stated that the pluralistic approach serves more the aim of establishing effective tools for the protection of human rights than that of providing philosophic and legal answers as to whether (universal) laws exist. It recognizes that these rights are not only part of Western heritage, and thus should be formulated with the participation of other cultures, simultaneously endeavoring to achieve the aim of guaranteeing that they will be accepted by all of them. Sally Engle Merry is of a similar opinion, claiming that the emerging regime of globally functioning human rights is not simply an imposition of Western forms of culture. "Instead, human rights is an open text, capable of appropriation and redefinition by groups who are players in the global legal arena" (Engle Merry 1997, 30).

The three-step analysis proposed by Ellen Messer: 1) to identify the actual behaviors; 2) to evaluate the material consequences and 3) to examine the ideas behind such behaviors is in my opinion a good starting point for a dialogue about the merit of specific customs and practices. Undoubtedly, each of the three aspects should be carefully analyzed, in particular the third which demands a depth of ethnohistorical knowledge.

Not only may the pluralistic approach be applied for the construction of bridges between human rights and cultural laws which stand in opposition to them but it seems that this method can also be used in the case of opposing cultural norms held by communities living within one country or for some other reason remaining in close contact with each other. An example of such diverse norms is the ritual slaughter of animals in accordance with the rites of Islam and Judaism and the norm which is applied by animal rights activists, who believe that this kind of slaughter – due to its cruelty – stands in contradiction with the values of the humanitarian treatment of animals.

For the purposes of this article, I conducted two interviews in Poland, namely with Imam Yosef Chadid and Rabbi Symcha Keller. The claims made by these two religious

authorities should not be treated as the claims of all Muslims and Jews in Poland, but I am of the opinion that they deserve attention and may indicate the direction in which the discussion between the these two minority-camps and that of the representatives of animal rights organizations should move.

Rabbi Keller told me that in accordance with tradition, the *shochet* (the person who performs the ritual slaughter) must have a high level of anatomical knowledge as well as knowledge of religious laws, possess an unblemished moral 'record' and – most importantly – feel love and empathy towards animals. The Rabbi said that he had heard from his grandfather and also from other people that they had sometimes met *shochets* to whom animals would come, placing their heads on their knees. The *shochet* did not slaughter the animals only for their meat, but also out of love, allowing the souls of the animals to rise to a higher level. According to the Rabbi, current slaughtering methods are "hopelessly primitive and brutal" (this statement refers to all kinds of commercial slaughtering of animals, including the ones which are deemed as being ritual slaughters).

> "For me the most important thing is lack of suffering – to not harm others, including animals. The Tzadik from Mszczonów stated: «Do not hurt others. Animals should be slaughtered by a spiritual master, one who will do it in such a way as to avoid inflicting suffering and allowing their souls rise to a higher level». He also said: «Ritual slaughter in its pure form is something completely different to 'ritual' slaughter on an industrial scale for export» (conversation with Rabbi Symcha Keller, Łódź, May, 2013).

The Imam whom I quizzed about the issue of ritual slaughter in Poland stated:

> "The Prophet said in the *hadiths* that other animals should not see the killing, and also that the tools should not be sharpened in front of them. (...) When commercial slaughter is performed, people forget the norms in place in Islam, such as sparing the animals suffering".

The Imam also stated that the problem of ritual slaughter is not of utmost importance for him, as there are many more significant problems faced in Poland by the Muslim minority. "A human being can eat only fish, vegetables and fruit and still live" – he added. He did however admit that 80% of Muslim communities do not want to buy meat in Poland, but that

> "there is a verse in the Quran stating that 'the food of the people of the Book is lawful onto you'. According to what the Prophet said, everything is *halal*, except for pork and carrion" (conversation with Imam Yosef Chadid, Poznań, May, 2013).

I do not claim to be a specialist on Islam or Judaism and freely admit that the selection of my informants was absolutely random – I had no idea beforehand how 'orthodox' their views would be or what conclusions which would be reached on the basis of their statements. Even though the two examples of the views cited above would unlikely be considered representative for the whole Muslim and Jewish communities in

Poland, I think they can be considered as starting points for conversations concerning the essence and sense of the ritual slaughter of animals. It might then turn out that after eliminating the economic context (the profit made from slaughter which has nothing to do with the traditions of either of these religious minorities), Jews and Muslims could become the allies and not opponents of people demanding the humanitarian treatment of animals, including butchered animals.

My idea here is not an effort to prove that the modern religious practice of the mass animal ritual slaughter, does not fit or indeed stands in contradiction to the assumptions of Islam and Judaism. According to the method proposed by Ellen Messer, such attempts to prove would require a comprehensive ethnhistorical analysis that I did not carry out.

If the views of Rabbi Keller and Imam Chadid expressed in their conversations with me were representative, they could lead to the extinguishing of the conflict surrounding ritual slaughter in Poland. The main deficiency of the pluralistic approach is that the decision-making process as to who is entitled to make representations on behalf of any given culture and who should be listened to in this respect will always be arbitrary and subjective, at least to a certain extent. This will particularly hold true in certain cultures where only designated groups (such as mature males) are entitled to speak on behalf of all members of the group. It is also important to remember the economic aspects behind the practicing or abandoning of certain customs and to remember that certain groups may stand to lose or gain financially from such changes.

Despite the obvious doubts raised by the necessity to give an arbitrary response under the pluralistic approach to the question as to who should decide which customs are important for the survival of any given culture, it should also be remembered that this reply will always be arbitrary. Every person participating in the culture may understand it in his/her own specific way while simultaneously being a member of a privileged or discriminated group.

Ellen Messer says that the choice between conflicting cultural standards should not be subjected to the final decision of dominant culture, but should – at least within certain limits – be negotiated. If the tools proposed by the researcher are accepted they can be used to see how the meaning of a particular cultural practice corresponds to its implementation. Consent for its adoption seems to complete a minimum consensus on what different cultures must agree, if they want to co-exist with each other.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A b i I s s a A. 1999. *Komentarz czterdziestu Hadisów Nalalija*. Stowarzyszenie Studentów Muzułmańskich w Polsce. Białystok.

B a r t h F. 2002. Toward a Richer Description and Analysis of Cultural Phenomena. In R.G. Fox and B.J. King (eds.), *Anthropology Beyond Culture*. Oxford – New York, 23–36.

E n g l e M e r r y S. 1997. Legal Pluralism and Transnational Culture: *The Ka Ho'okolokolonui Kanaka Maoli* Tribunal, Hawaii, 1993. In R.A. Wilson (ed.) *Human Rights, Culture and Context*. London, Chicago, Illinois, 28–47.

F o x R. 1987. The Disunity of Anthropology and the Unity of Mankind. In K. Moore (ed.), *Way Marks*. Notre Dam USA, 17–42.

G l o c k H. - J. 2001. *Słownik wittgensteinowski*. Warszawa.

G o o d a l e M. 2006. Ethical Theory as Social Practice. *American Anthropologist* 108 (1 March), 25–37.

K r y s i ń s k a - K a ł u ż n a M. 1999. Relatywizm kulturowy a prawa człowieka. *Lud* 83, 11–31.

L a k o f f G. 1987. *Women, Fire and Dangerous Things: What Categories Reveal About the Mind*. Chicago.

M e s s e r E. 1993. Anthropology and Human Rights. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22, 221–249.

M e s s e r E. 1997. Pluralist approaches to Human Rights. *Journal of Anthropological Research* 53, 293–317.

P e d e r s e n S. 1991. National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-Making. *The Journal of Modern History* 63 (4, Dec.), 647–680.

S a r k o w i c z R. and S t e l m a c h J. 1996. *Teoria prawa*. Kraków.

S m i t h M. W. 1955. Continuity in Culture Contact: Examples from Southern British Columbia. *Man* 55, 100–105.

S t o i ń s k a - K a i r s k a I. 2002. Lengua y educación frente a la pervivencia de las culturas nativas de America Latina. *Estudios Latinoamericanos* 22, 31–67.

V a n d e r K r o e f J. M. 1959. Culture Contact and Culture Conflict in Western New Guinea. *Anthropological Quarterly* 32 (3), 134–160.

W i t t g e n s t e i n L. 2000. *Dociekania filozoficzne*. Warszawa.

W o l e ń s k i J. 1983. Ludwig Wittgenstein o naturze refleksji filozoficznej. In Z. Kuderowicz (ed.), *Filozofia współczesna* 2. Warszawa, 6–20.

Author's address:

Magdalena Krysińska-Kałużna, Ph.D.
Ośrodek Studiów Amerykańskich – CESLA
University of Warsaw
Al. Niepodległości 22, 02-653 Warszawa, POLAND
e-mail: m.krysinska-ka@uw.edu.pl

B O O K   R E V I E W

Grażyna Kubica. 2015. *Maria Czaplicka: Sex, Shamanism and Race. An Anthropological Biography.* **Kraków[1].**

Anna Engelking

Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw

Grażyna Kubica's monograph, *Maria Czaplicka: Sex, Shamanism and Race. An Anthropological Biography* is unique in Polish anthropology. This anthropological biography of an scientist whose way of life and academic career did not follow the scripted path of success, is a pioneering work, which can be compared perhaps only with the *Sisters of Malinowski* penned by the same author (Kubica 2006).

Grażyna Kubica, in a lucid long-term research project, inoculates on Polish ground theoretical achievements and experiences developed in the Western history of anthropology, including innovative anthropological biographical writing. Her work on Maria Antonina Czaplicka (1884–1921) is set in very broad historical, social and cultural contexts, taking into account both the history of anthropology in its broadest sense (the history of ideas, concepts, institutions, key figures and their achievements), and complex issues of women-scholars' emancipation, the history of the circles where Czaplicka operated (Polish, British and Russian), and finally political history. It is a thoughtful and critical contextualization, expanding the limits of the biography far beyond a traditional account of the trajectory of a person's life; it takes on a universal dimension, it moves in a reader his or her personal strings and highlights the problems that are also very much on the map now. This is because the author applies contemporary anthropological questions to past contexts.

The deep methodological awareness of the author and her self-consciousness are an extremely valuable and inspiring side of the book. Chapter 1, "History of anthropology – the modern field of research" is an excellent theoretical introduction about the need for a reflexive history of anthropology and contains a critical discussion of the formative distinction between historicism and presentism. Kubica shows how biography and anthropology intertwine and condition each other; she argues for anthropological biographies to be perceived as anthropological data. She situates her own project – after

---

[1] Published in Polish: Grażyna Kubica 2015. *Maria Czaplicka: Płeć, szamanizm, rasa. Biografia antropologiczna*. Kraków: Wyd. UJ.

Sally Cole – within a critical feminist history of anthropology, whose task is understood as the contemplation of theories to discover their concealed positions though a critical reading of women's anthropological writing. Following this path, she argues that firstly, an understanding of the difficult existential situation of Maria Czaplicka as an anthropologist who was constantly threatened with marginalization and insecurity and secondly, an understanding of the circumstances behind the tragic end of her life and the fate of her papers, brings much more to the history of anthropology – and, more broadly, to the history of science – than limiting the research to the study of mainstream ideas, works and characters. In her approach, the anthropological biography turns into a new and extremely interesting genre of historical writing.

Throughout her musings the reader is accompanied by the undisguised author in a behind the scenes role. Grażyna Kubica reveals her "self" as a researcher: she recounts her motivations, objectives, weaves into her narrative a tale about the adventures of research, her search for sources, methodological difficulties and even comments upon the works of other authors about Czaplicka and corrects their mistakes. Both this continuous criticism of sources running parallel with the biographical story, closely intertwined with the personal perspective of the author, are evidence of her championing the credentials of the anthropologist and historian of anthropology.

The high level of Kubica's professionalism is evident in her thoughtful way of contextualizing Czaplicka's scientific biography, by giving an account of anthropological discussions on race, arctic hysteria, shamanism and the "third gender". She critically reports them from the period of evolutionism to modern times and in her key argumentative points she discusses the ideas and findings of Czaplicka and their impact on the course of these discussions. By juxtaposing how carelessly many contemporary and later researchers have read the works of Czaplicka and how others have been inspired by her ideas, Kubica builds in the reader a conviction of the value of Czaplicka's achievements, not only as a contribution to the history of anthropology, but also as a vivid work still open for today's reading and new considerations based on it.

Extremely interesting are those parts of the book, which could constitute separate studies, but are woven into the context of the life and work of Maria Czaplicka giving them new unexpected dimensions while at the same time notably expanding further research perspectives. I want to draw particular attention, in this context, to the chapters on the origins of women's participation in British academic institutions and organizations, and to Robert Marrett, a forgotten pre-functionalist, the author of observations and postulates formulated later by the functionalist revolution. Kubica's view of Czaplicka's book *My Siberian Year* as a work of ethnographic prose and her photographs through the prism of new approaches of visual anthropology are also very refreshing.

Grażyna Kubica's monograph is the culmination of several years of arduous work on a biography of Czaplicka including as it does archival research in Poland, Great

Britain, USA and Russia, the many interviews she conducted and her time-consuming library queries (note extensive literature, mostly in English). Today, when the centenary of Maria Czaplicka's (famous and fascinatingly described by Kubica) expedition to Siberia has recently taken place, it is an extremely opportune moment that the book be published. I have no doubt that Grażyna Kubica's monograph marks a turning point in the Polish history of anthropology providing a new model to practice this sub-discipline. I am also convinced that in the future it will appear in English. *Maria Czaplicka: Sex, Shamanism and Race* is in fact a work, that is building bridges, not only between the history of Polish and British anthropology, but also between anthropologies here and now.

Author's address:

Anna Engelking, Ph. D. Hab.
Institute of Slavic Studies
Polish Academy of Sciences
ul. Bartoszewicza 1b m. 17
00-337 Warszawa, POLAND
e-mail: engelking@ispan.waw.pl

INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

We invite you to submit articles to our periodical

Please, send articles which have not been published previously.

Size of an article: We accept texts of 1 sheet (up to 40 000 characters). For each text, please include a summary (up to 1 000 characters) and keywords.

Language of an article: English.

Authors are obliged to ensure the correct translation of texts into English. Authors are responsible for the linguistic quality of their articles.

Editorial board transmits accepted articles to external reviewers. After reviewing with positive evaluation, and then making corrections by authors, editorial board forwards articles to the linguistic editor (a native speaker).

Article summary should be written in Polish and English.

In the case of an article relating to the area, which researchers usually describe in a language other than English, it can be accompanied by a summary in the European language, eg. issues concerning Spain, South America and Mexico – in Spanish, issues concerning the former Soviet Union – in Russian, Germanic themes – in German, problems of France, Belgium and French-speaking former colonies – in French, and so on.

Way of forwarding the article to the editorial board: Please send your texts in electronic form to the editor's e-mail address: Ethnologia_Polona@iaepan.poznan.pl. The uploaded file should be saved in the Word format.

Photographs/ pictures/ illustrations (up to 6 pieces): Please send them at a resolution of not less than 1000 dpi in jpg, tif or pdf format. Photos / illustrations with a large capacity can be sent on CD to the address of the editor:

Redakcja „Ethnologia Polona".
Instytutu Archeologii i Etnologii PAN
ul. Rubież 46, 61-612 Poznań, Poland.

It is necessary to add the list of photographs / illustrations and descriptions to them. The author of the article must have the copyrights and property rights of photos / illustrations, or must send to the editor the consent of persons / institutions who have copyrights and property rights to photos / illustrations for their free publication by the editors of "Ethnologia Polona".

Text Formatting: font size 12, footnotes and bibliography: 10; margins (left, right, top and bottom): 2.5 cm; spacing: 1.5 line.

Spaces: Please use only single spaces, please do not put a space after round brackets: (ethnology), similarly in the case of the quotation: "ethnology".

Quotes:

Short quotes should be placed in quotation marks in the text, and should not apply italics in this case. Citation should not end with a dot, but the whole sentence. Please do not put the dots before the sign ", only after it (".).

Long quotes, please save in a font of the 11 size, in a new paragraph with a wider, left margin, so that the quotation stands out in the text. Behind quote should be given the name of the author, year and pages in brackets. Please put a dot after brackets (not before brackets).

Hyphens: Please use short dashes to combine words (20th-century anthropologist) and long ones in inclusions (both names – ethnology and anthropology – are used).

Sections of the text: Please enter section titles, if the text requires; Please do not enter spacing between paragraphs and between a section title and the text.

The rules of reviewing articles:

Articles submitted for publication in the journal "Ethnologia Polona" are subject to a two-stage process of reviewing.

– 1 stage

The texts are evaluated by the editors in terms match the profile of the magazine, the quality of the language, value and quality of the text, and adaptation to editorial requirements. At this stage, editorial board decides to send a paper for review. If the editors' decision is negative, the author receives a justification of not acceptance of the article.

– 2 stage

If the article positively goes through the first stage of reviewing, is sent as an anonymous to two reviewers (double-blind review), experts in the field, of which at least one is not from the Editorial Committee. The scope of review includes an assessment of the merits, methodological assessment of the structure of the text, argumentation and formal characteristics of a scientific text. Reviewers receive the reviewing form to fill out, and a declaration of no conflict of interests to sign.

On the basis of review the editorial decides to publish of the text, publish it after the changes suggested by the reviewers or reject. The author receives the content of reviews and information about qualifying of the text for print or rejection.

Footnotes:

Explanation to a text: bottom footnotes numbered in Arabic numerals; number of a footnote in the main text should be placed before a dot ending a sentence.

Bibliographical references: please apply the system of footnotes in the text (in brackets), not bottom footnotes.

Example: (Geertz 2005, 31). If a name of an author appears in a phrase, which ends with a footnote then (2005, 31).

The reference to a book or an article (Geertz 2005). If a name of an author appears in a phrase, which ends with a footnote then (2005).

Quoted: (Wittgenstein cit. after: Geertz 2005, 34).

Bibliography:

Positions of literature used in an article should be listed at the end – the final bibliography is necessary for the proper indexing of citations in databases such as Google Scholar and Publish or Perish program.

Links to literature in the text or in a footnote should be given in brackets with regard to the author's name, publication date and page number, for example. (Blake 1998, 59) or (Raven and Milisauskas 1983, 259). Due items to literature published by three or more authors should be given only the name of the first one, after which you need to write et al., for example (Sofer et al. 2000, 814). Be sure to specify the page numbers in full form, eg. 35–37, 123–135.

The rules for writing a final bibliography:

– titles of journals, monographs, collective works – *italics*,
– a full range of pages,
– no shortcuts preceding volume number of a magazine (vol.), and pages (p.),
– only the place of publication, without a publisher's name,
– shortcuts (ed. / eds.) to the editor, editors,
– a comma only before the number of pages; after (ed. / eds.) only in the case of a chapter in a collective work and for more than two authors; in other cases, the separation of part of the record with a dot,
– an author's given name initial after his surname, only for a chapter in a collective work initials of editor / editors before surname.

Examples:

Articles in journals

Bogucki P. 1993. Animal traction and household economies in Neolithic Europe. *Antiquity* 67 (256), 492–503.

Kruk J. and Milisauskas S. 1983. Chronologia absolutna osadnictwa neolitycznego z Bronocic, woj. kieleckie. *Archeologia Polski* 28 (2), 257–320.

A single authors or editors of books

Czerniak L. 1980. *Rozwój społeczeństw kultury późnej ceramiki wstęgowej na Kujawach.* Poznań.

Zych R. 2008. *Kultura pucharów lejkowatych w Polsce południowo-wschodniej. Collectio Archaeologica Ressoviensis* 7. Rzeszów.

Hodder I. (ed.) 1991. *Archaeological theory in Europe. The last three decades.* London.

Several authors or editors of books

Kristiansen K. and Larsson T. B. 2005. *The Rise of Bronze Age Society. Travels, Transmissions and Transformations.* Cambridge.

Czebreszuk J. and Müller J. (eds.) 2004. *Ausgrabungen und Forschungen in einer prähistorischen Siedlungskammer Großpolens 1. Forschungsstand. Erste Ergebnisse. Das östliche Feuchtbodenareal. Studien zur Archäologie in Ostmitteleuropa 2.* Poznań, Kiel, Rahden (Westf.).

Articles in the collective works or chapters in books

Iwaniszewski S. 2006. Megalityczny obrządek pogrzebowy i neolityczny krajobraz w mikro-regionie stryczowickim na Wyżynie Sandomiersko-Opatowskiej. In J. Libera and K. Tunia (eds.), *Idea megalityczna w obrządku pogrzebowym kultury pucharów lejko-watych*. Lublin, Kraków, 259–269.

Kulczycka-Leciejewiczowa A. 2006. Kultura ceramiki wstęgowej kłutej w południowej Polsce. In M. Kaczanowska (ed.), *Dziedzictwo cywilizacji naddunajskich: Małopolska na przełomie epoki kamienia i miedzi*. Biblioteka Muzeum Archeologicznego w Kra-kowie 1. Kraków, 9–21.

In the case of several works of the same author – his name in the list of bibliography is repeated every time, followed by a date of publication.

Rights & conditions

The editors reserve the right to shorten texts (after consultation with the author). Articles that do not meet the above editorial requirements and those which for other reasons are not suitable for publication will be returned to the authors. Similarly, we will not print texts, which authors would not done corrections, advised by the editors.

Editors do not pay a fee for the published text, photograph, illustration.

Authors are required to send by e-mail or by mail following statements:

– about keeping of ethical principles and not breaking the law while carrying out scientific research (especially in a case of the confidentiality of personal data of respondents) and during of creating an article (eg. plagiarism);

– of having full copyright to an article by authors signed in a text, and not the use ghost-writing;

– about the consent of persons / institutions having copyright and property rights to photos / illustrations contained in an article on their free publication by the editors of "Ethnologia Polona" and the transfer of property rights (no copyright) of published illustrations or photos to the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology Polish Academy of Sciences (this means that the Institute has the right to reproduce an article with attached photo or illustration in a form of printing or an electronic file).

The authors of articles accepted for publication are required to send to the editor a signed contract.

Publication Ethics:

http://iaepan.vot.pl/en/publishing-house/czasopisma/ethnologia-polona/
about-the-journal-etpo/publication-ethics-eplona

Find us on: http://www.iaepan.edu.pl/, RCIN, Facebook, Index Copernicus, BazHum.

IN POLISH:

Informacje dla Autorów:
http://iaepan.vot.pl/wydawnictwo/czasopisma/ethnologia-polona/dla-autorow