

Tibet under Chinese Rule

By Dina Buck

Introduction

The struggle between Tibet and China has been a long and intractable one. How China chooses to deal with Tibet, commonly referred to as the “Tibet Question,” is a point of controversy both within China and for the international community at large. The two main points of concern are Tibet’s quest for self-determination and Tibetan quality of life under Chinese rule. While Tibet’s struggle for self-determination can be linked with the questionable treatment Tibetans face under the Chinese government (hereafter referred to as Beijing), the two issues are not exactly the same. Tibet’s quest for self-determination has its roots in Beijing’s invasion and takeover in 1950. No doubt this has contributed to the grievances the Tibetan Government in Exile (TGIE) and the Tibetan people have with current Beijing rule. The important role self-determination plays in the psychological well-being of Tibetans can be deciphered from the current Dalai Lama’s discussions with the international community, as well as from his persistent efforts to negotiate with Beijing for greater self-determination allowances. The Tibetan people’s strong support of the Dalai Lama can be interpreted as collective agreement with his views. The quest for self-determination also leaves open the question of whether or not Tibetans and the TGIE would seek greater autonomy even if they felt they were treated fairly by Beijing. However, it is clear Tibetans are not always treated well or fairly. In many ways, Tibetans are marginalized and oppressed, both intentionally and inadvertently, by Beijing and the hegemony of Chinese culture. Resentment over Beijing’s historical takeover likely exacerbates the Tibetans’ sense of being wronged, but the present day human rights problems Tibetans experience at the hands of Beijing are issues in their own right.

Tibet’s Quest for Self-determination

Tibetan national sovereignty is one of the festering disputes between China and Tibet. Tibet had all the characteristics of a sovereign nation, with its own system of governance, culture, religion, and ethnically distinct population prior to Beijing’s invasion of Tibetan territory in 1950. Tibet also conducted its international relations separately from China, even signing its own treaties and agreements with other nations. Since invading, Beijing asserts Tibet has been a part of China for several centuries and, therefore, China is its proper ruler. Furthermore, Beijing asserts its invasion was meant to free an oppressed people from a cruel system of feudal serfdom and pro-imperialism that went against the desires of the Tibetan people. Consequently, Beijing paints itself as Tibet’s liberator, though the veracity of this claim is questionable. In 1951, Tibetan delegates sent to Beijing to negotiate for Tibetan independence were tricked and intimidated into signing a “17 Point Agreement.” The agreement, while stating that Tibet would retain most of its culture and practices, also included a provision stating Tibet would become part of the People’s Republic of China. This was not clear to the delegates and when they tried to question Chinese authorities on contradictory aspects of the agreement, they were told that failure to sign would result in the dispatching of the People’s Liberation Army (Blondeau 2008).

Since 1950, China has enacted a number of development projects and policy reforms in an effort to stabilize Tibet and bring it into its fold. Many of these policies and projects had disastrous effects for the Tibetan people. The Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s and 1970s, which promoted secularism, had a particularly devastating effect on Tibetan culture, which is rooted in religion.

Economic gains for Tibetans, most of which have only occurred since the 1980s, still leave them in positions of relative disadvantage when compared to their Han Chinese counterparts.

Though their leader is in exile, Tibetans still look to the current Dalai Lama for direction. One of his main endeavors since his escape from Tibet in 1958 has been his struggle for Tibetan self-rule. While he has sought full independence in the past, the Dalai Lama tried to find compromise in 1988 by offering the Strasbourg or “Middle Way” Proposal. This proposal forgoes independence, allowing China to determine international relations and security issues, but asks Beijing for true autonomy to self-govern in all other areas including, but not limited to, education, religion, economy, environment, and culture. Beijing has not accepted this offer and, in fact, has tirelessly continued to assert its claims of sovereignty over Tibet. While the international community treats Tibet as part of China and does not officially recognize it as a sovereign nation, there is at least some international sentiment that Beijing’s claim to Tibet is invalid. Unfortunately, Beijing considers the international community’s treatment of Tibet as part of China to be one of the validating reasons for its right to govern the region.

Chinese Hegemony

Beijing regularly points to various laws it has enacted purportedly to benefit Tibet, as well as to several other concessions it has granted Tibetans. One law meant to benefit minorities is the Law on Regional National Autonomy (LRNA). Article 15 of the LRNA allows for “protection of minority concerns in the areas of language, education, political representation, administrative appointments, local economic and financial policies, and the use of local and natural resources” (Davis 2008). However, these allowances fall under the overarching control of Beijing, which can, and does, intervene in these protections when it deems certain activities go against its idea of national unity.

An additional challenge for Tibetans is that the rights and benefits they are afforded come with the stipulation of having to be done the “Chinese Way.” As a result, many of Tibet’s cultural traditions have been manipulated or diluted. For example, though China claims it gives Tibetans religious freedom, religion was banned until 1976. Although religious expression has since been allowed, Tibetans complain that their freedom in this area remains limited (Métraux and Yoxall 2007). In the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), Tibetans are not allowed to display photos of the Dalai Lama, and China has interfered in Tibet’s process of choosing reincarnated lamas. The standardized education system, which some claim Beijing uses as a tool for assimilation, is also problematic. Though Beijing can point to increased literacy rates and school attendance in Tibet, Tibetans still struggle to complete school in part because they have trouble passing the Mandarin language exams required to advance through the education system. Unsurprisingly, situations like these serve to strengthen Tibetan national identity.

To perpetuate the notion that Tibetans ought to be part of China, the government released six State Council White Papers between 1991 and 2006 that reiterate China’s proper claim to Tibet and its role as liberator. These papers also include various statistics and facts supporting Beijing’s argument that Tibetans’ circumstances have drastically improved under Beijing’s rule (Smith 2008). However, one must ask why the TGIE and the Tibetan people continue to fight for greater self-determination if Beijing’s claims of liberating and significantly improving the lives of Tibetans are true. Though some Tibetans, mainly those in urban areas, have indeed experienced quality of life improvements, this does not mean Beijing’s efforts have been a success. It has been speculated that, were Tibet a nation, it would rank at or near the bottom of the United Nation’s Human Development Index (Goldstein et al 2003). This is exacerbated by the fact that most development efforts in the TAR have been concentrated in the urban areas where Han Chinese are the majority.

Since most Tibetans live in rural areas, this makes it difficult for them to reap any substantial gains from Beijing's modernization efforts.

Concluding Remarks: Why the “Tibet Question” Remains Intractable

It is important for the international community to realize that both Tibet and China view the “Tibet Question” through their own subjective lens. This does not mean there are not factual incidents of oppression and human rights abuse; nor does it mean there have not been measurable efforts on behalf of Beijing to improve the lives of Tibetans. Though Tibetans have been undeniably oppressed and marginalized, it would be unfair to claim Beijing has not attempted to improve living standards in the TAR, even if its motivation is largely to harmonize Tibet with the rest of China.

There is a strong disconnect between the TGIE and Beijing's political philosophies, which is perhaps the main reason the “Tibet Question” stands at an impasse. The current Dalai Lama supports democratic policy in the TAR and the character of his negotiation efforts with Beijing serve as an example of his belief in conducting government affairs democratically. Simultaneously, Beijing's laws and its treatment of its citizens stem from its strong belief in communist ideology, which holds that individual rights are secondary to the state's right to uphold social order and protect society's interest as a whole. This means the government will often ignore individual rights and proper legal proceedings whenever it believes doing so will protect the state's goals (Li2007). Setting the historical invasion aside, if we look at Beijing's efforts to handle the “Tibet Question,” it becomes clear its policies toward Tibet stem from its inability to view governance outside communist parameters. This suggests it would take international pressure to get Beijing to reconsider its stance on Tibet. However, given China's increasing economic and political power, this does not appear to be a possibility waiting on the horizon.

Annotated Bibliography

Blondeau, Anne-Marie, and Katia Buffetrille (eds.). 2008. Authenticating Tibet: Answers to China's 100 Questions. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Annotation: This book was inspired by a 1989 pamphlet disseminated to Westerners by the Chinese government that contained “100 questions about Tibet” along with the government's answers. The editors gathered 15 leading experts on Tibet from different countries to give objective answers to the same 100 questions in the pamphlet, including a summary of the original answers. The book is divided into topic sections that include human rights, policies toward the Dalai Lama, Tibet's right to autonomy, and more. The result is a comprehensive summary of China-Tibet relations that corrects the Chinese propaganda.

Carlson, Allen. 2004. “Beijing's Tibet Policy: Securing Sovereignty and Legitimacy,” in *The East-West Center of Washington's Policy Studies*. Washington, DC.

Annotation: In this extensively researched and well-written report, the author examines Beijing's policies on Tibet from the 1970's onward. The author contends that at no time did Beijing have any true intention of giving Tibet genuine autonomy, as all legal allowances for autonomy were subordinate to overarching Chinese rule. He argues that, while Beijing appeared to have a more flexible position towards Tibet and Tibetan autonomy in the 1970's

and 1980's, both internal and external criticism of Beijing's stance on Tibet caused the government to clamp down on its "Tibet policy." The author believes that, at bottom, the issue of sovereignty and its importance in the international political arena, and the fact that China would harm its "advantageous position in South and Central Asia" were it to give Tibet autonomy, are the reasons why China has never truly intended to relinquish its claim to Tibet.

The Chinese Government. 2009. "Protection and Development of Tibetan Culture." *Chinese Journal of International Law* 8 (1): 233-249.

Annotation: This government White Paper, released by the State Council Information Office of China, reports on the improvements for Tibetans and their culture in the areas of written and visual media, educational opportunities, cultural relic and traditions preservation, modernization, and freedom of religious expression and practice. The report strongly criticizes the current Dalai Lama and emphasizes China's role in saving Tibetans from an intense, oppressive feudal system via peaceful means in 1951. The report further claims that, had China not stepped in to liberate the Tibetan people, they would still be living under conditions akin to the Middle Ages. It is difficult to ignore the extreme one-sidedness of this report. Understood within the context of the extensive body of literature on Tibet-China relations refuting the self-proclaimed stellar treatment of Tibet by China, one has to conclude that the information contained within this report is largely propaganda.

Davis, Michael C. 2001. "The Future of Tibet: A Chinese Dilemma." *Human Rights Review* 2 (2): 7-17.

Annotation: This article convincingly discusses the benefits China stands to gain if it agrees to a confederal arrangement with its "peripheral communities," including Tibet, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. It also points out how the Chinese government's current top-down approach to Tibet, and its failure to enact human rights covenants it has signed, demonstrate that China does not have any genuine intentions of allowing Tibet autonomy. The author also posits that, even if autonomy were granted, Tibet's lack of local governmental institutions would make sustainable autonomy unlikely.

Davis, Michael C. 2007. "Quest for Self-Rule in Tibet." *Journal of Democracy* 18 (4): 157-171.

Annotation: This focused and concise article examines how China's existing national minority policies have failed to give Tibet any substantive autonomy. Davis, who is well-versed in China's various laws involving minority rights, demonstrates how the laws China currently uses in dealing with Tibetan rights (e.g., the Law on Regional National Autonomy) seem to give, but then take away rights. The laws do this by requiring that all legal decisions exercised by autonomous regions go through an approval process headed by Beijing. He proposes that Tibet might use Article 31 in the PRC's 1983 Constitution to gain greater autonomy, since Article 31 would allow Beijing to exercise greater flexibility in its approach to Tibet.

Davis, Michael C. 2008. "Establishing a Workable Autonomy in Tibet." *Human Rights Quarterly* 30 (2): 222-258.

Annotation: In this article, Davis provides a good overview of the Chinese government's legal policies towards Tibet and discusses how the government's preference for using its national minority autonomy policies in lieu of the Chinese Constitution when handling its Tibet relations is motivated by its desire to maintain control over Tibetan affairs. The national minority policies have central government authority built into them and, thus, remove any genuine allowance for self-determination. Davis points out that Article 31 in the Chinese Constitution provides flexibility that would allow China to create a customized approach to Tibet and could be the solution to Tibetan autonomy without secession. Because Article 31 has been fairly successful in terms of China's relationship with Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan, Davis argues, there is no reason for it not to be applied to Tibet as well.

Dillon, Michael. 2009. Contemporary China - An Introduction. London: Routledge.

Annotation: This book provides an overall perspective on modern day China and helps the reader understand China's politics and culture from a neutral point of view. The author includes chapters on religious and ethnic minorities, Tibet, and law and human rights. The author's lack of partisanship lends clarity to the "facts on the ground" in contemporary China and makes this book a valuable source for those wanting to gain a rhetoric-free overall understanding of the many aspects of China.

Dreyer, June Teufel. 2006. "Tibetan Economic Development under the PRC," in Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer (eds.), Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Annotation: The author discusses the development efforts the Chinese government has attempted in Tibet since 1951. The discussion clearly demonstrates that many, if not most, of the Chinese government's development efforts had unintended negative consequences for Tibetans and their culture. The development efforts, based not on sustainable concepts but, rather, on top-down approaches by the Chinese government, have created a situation of dependency for Tibet. Examples of dictatorial political control of Tibet offer the reader a perspective on how the marginalization of Tibetans has evolved.

Goldstein, Melvyn C., Ben Jiao, Cynthia M. Beall, and Phuntsog Tsering. 2003. "Development and Change in Rural Tibet." *Asian Survey* 43 (5): 758-779.

Annotation: The authors of this article examine the impact China's economic reforms have had on the quality of life for Tibetans living in four rural townships. Reforms studied include

land division and de-collectivization, family planning, labor migration, and economic development in the rural areas. The study includes 13 villages and 780 households. The authors found that, while Tibetans have gained from some reforms, such as de-collectivization, they have been adversely impacted by many of the others. They conclude that, unless China is willing to make changes to development policy, rural Tibetan populations may lose any current gains, or even slide backwards in progress.

Hanrahan, Clare (ed.). 2009. Tibet: Opposing Viewpoints. Farmington Hills: Greenhaven Press.

Annotation: The editor of this book has compiled articles on Tibet-China relations covering the following issues: Tibetan independence and Chinese sovereignty; Tibetan cultural preservation; whether or not Tibet has benefited from Chinese governmental policies; and natural resource extraction on the Tibetan plateau. Articles arguing opposing positions on each issue are presented. The book is formatted for educational use through questions posed for reader consideration and a summary of each author's position is provided at the end of the book. The result is an accessible and balanced compilation covering some of the most pressing Tibet-China controversies.

He, Baogang. 2006. "The Dalai Lama's Autonomy Proposal," in [Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer \(eds.\)](#), Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Annotation: In this chapter, the author examines the Dalai Lama's proposal for independence and Beijing's rejection to it. The author discusses various reasons Beijing has not accepted the proposal, including the following: China and Tibet have different political interpretations of what "autonomous" means and what it should afford; there is disagreement about what regions should be included in an autonomous Tibet; the fact that some Tibetan commentary still includes the word "independence" leads Beijing to believe that autonomy will lead to a full-blown grab at independence in the future; and the Dalai Lama refuses to make a public statement agreeing that Tibet is an inalienable part of China. The article offers a fair-minded attempt to assess the Dalai Lama's proposal through the eyes of the Chinese government and demonstrate why it sees the proposal for autonomy as problematic.

Heath, John. 2005. Tibet and China in the 21st Century. London: Saqi Books.

Annotation: This book is written from a position of strong support for Tibetans and for their desire for autonomy. It includes a foreword by the Dalai Lama and offers a comprehensive and informative discussion of the political history of Tibet, as well as chapters on modern day development, economics, and human rights. While the book is pro-Tibet, it offers substantive information on the long-standing Tibet-China struggle and would serve as an informative resource for anyone wanting to gain a solid understand of why and how Tibet fights for autonomy.

Hillman, Ben. 2008. "Money Can't Buy Tibetans' Love." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 171 (3): 60-63.

Annotation: In this article, the author looks at how Tibetans have benefited from the Chinese government's modernization efforts in Tibet and concludes that, despite increases in education spending, business growth, infrastructure development, tourism, etc., Tibetans are still being left behind. Han Chinese business owners readily admit that they hire other Han because Tibetans often lack the skills necessary for existing opportunities. The school system often lacks qualified teachers due to reluctance to locate to "remote posts," and language continues to be a barrier. The author also points out how a dearth of skills-training organizations in the region, in part due to the Chinese government's suspicious attitude toward what are largely seen as Tibet-sympathetic Western NGOs, further exacerbates the problem. The article is especially convincing because the author's material comes, in part, from observations he made while traveling in Tibet.

Johnson, Bonnie. 2000. "The Politics, Policies, and Practices in Linguistic Minority Education in the People's Republic of China: The Case of Tibet." *International Journal of Educational Research* 33 (6): 593-600.

Annotation: The author of this article discusses the challenges Tibetan children face when they are required to go through a standardized education system that emphasizes the Mandarin language. Though policies have been put in place to accommodate minority languages in schools, the standardized Chinese curriculum still leaves little flexibility for teachers and students. Lack of qualified teachers, a passing grades requirement on examinations given in Mandarin to advance through the system, and cultural beliefs on behalf of both Tibetans and Han Chinese exacerbate the problem. The author posits that China has an interest in assimilating Tibetan students into Chinese culture for purposes of national harmony. At the same time, Tibetans, who are highly-religious, are suspicious of secularized education and have trouble seeing its relevance to their lives. The author proposes that a truly bi-lingual educational system could help improve the situation.

Lafitte, Gabriel. 1999. "Tibetan Futures: Imagining Collective Destinies." *Futures* 31 (2): 155-169.

Annotation: Lafitte, who has worked with Tibetans for more than two decades and served as a consultant to the Tibet Government in Exile's (TGIE's) Planning Council, discusses the challenges the Planning Council faced when commissioned by the Dalai Lama in 1995 to come up with a future vision for Tibet based on his own call for "an indigenous model of development" that allows Tibet to modernize, but in a way that preserves Tibetan values rather than incorporating China's version of modernization. Lafitte makes clear that, though Tibetans desire autonomy and self-direction, they have faced challenges in the form of prescriptive recommendations, generational changes in attitudes, and the concern that the TGIE Planning Council cannot speak for the almost six million Tibetans living in Tibet.

Lafitte also provides unique insight into the attitudes and psychology of the Tibetans serving in the TGIE, including the pressure they feel to live up to an idealized standard of “Tibetan-ness” commonly touted by Westerners and even by Tibetans themselves. There is also sentiment amongst older Tibetans that they are more “truly” Tibetan because they are a generation closer to being birthed and reared on Tibetan territory.

Li, Jiefen. 2007. “Human Rights versus State Interests in China: Case Studies.” *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 9 (2): 147-168.

Annotation: The author argues that human rights abuse in China is widespread and rampant due to a variety of factors, including China’s emphasis on social stability, abuse of local control policies by police who are given unsupervised freedom to administer policies as they see fit, the cultural belief that individuals are secondary to the state’s welfare, a flawed legal system that allows local policies to override larger bodies of law (including the Chinese Constitution), and a changing economy in China that is leading to greater illegal migration of rural citizens into cities. Case studies provide tangible examples of human rights abuse under these circumstances.

Métraux, Daniel A., and James W. Yoxall. 2007. China Today: A Brief Introduction. Staunton: Virginia Review of Asian Studies.

Annotation: This work gives a brief overview of Tibet-China relations and then discusses observations of Tibetan life and attitudes toward China. Most interesting and insightful are points made about China’s military and economic incentives for wanting sovereignty over Tibet and the fact that any Tibetan wanting to rise up the economic ladder must “work through a Chinese system.” While the authors observed that many Tibetans seem to be doing well and that Tibetan culture seems to be thriving, they also observed oppressive tactics put in place by the Chinese government and encountered overwhelming Tibetan sentiment that China is indeed trying to overtake their cultural identity.

Mountcastle, Amy. 2006. “The Tibet Question and the Politics of the ‘Real,’” in Barry Sautman and June Teufel Dreyer (eds.), Contemporary Tibet: Politics, Development, and Society in a Disputed Region. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc.

Annotation: In this insightful and well-written chapter, the author argues that human rights issues are often pegged as idealistic and therefore outside the arena of “real” politics. Critics of Tibet’s fight for human rights, including academics and the Chinese government, have used this mindset to discredit and dismiss Tibet’s concerns about self-governance and cultural marginalization. Those who point to statistics, laws, and other more factual evidence as a way to define the Tibet-China situation reduce the issue into something that entirely misses the point. Tibet has valid grievances that cannot be argued away by demonstrating that, for example, some of the policies enacted by the Chinese government have improved the material situation for some Tibetans. The author reminds us that, politically and socially,

Tibet has been secondary to the Chinese hegemon and argues that one of Tibet's main issues, human rights, holds a valid position within the realm of politics.

None listed. 2006. "What Is the Dalai Lama's Middle Way?" *China Daily* (July 26).

Annotation: This newspaper article takes a stand in support of Beijing by criticizing the Dalai Lama's "Middle Way" proposal. The author criticizes the Dalai Lama for various reasons, including the fact that he has not publicly conceded that Tibet is an integral part of China; that he wants a demilitarized "peace zone" in Tibet; and that he would like Tibetans to live in areas that are not inundated by Han Chinese (which, according to the author, suggests the Dalai Lama would kick Han Chinese out of Tibet). The author contends that the Dalai Lama had not really given up on the idea of full independence because he has changed his stance on various issues and made comments suggesting that independence may be the only alternative left if China will not grant self-determination.

Sautman, Barry. 2006. "Colonialism, Genocide, and Tibet." *Asian Ethnicity* 7 (3): 243-265.

Annotation: In this article, the author refutes common and widespread claims that Tibet is enduring, or has endured, physical and cultural genocide; that it has, in effect, been colonized by China; and that it is undergoing resource exploitation for China's material gain. The author argues that such hyperbolic abuse of terminology does a disservice to effectively handling the China-Tibet issue and urges the reader to look at factual evidence pointing to various benefits, rights, and material gains Tibetans have reaped since China began modernizing the region.

Sautman, Barry (ed.). 2006. "Tibet and the (Mis-) Representation of Cultural Genocide," in Cultural Genocide and Asian State Peripheries. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.

Annotation: Sautman argues that Tibet is not undergoing the "cultural genocide" so widely claimed by Tibetans and their Western supporters, but is instead facing cultural change due to the forces of modernization. He argues that China has not demonstrated a purposeful effort to deny or, more seriously, erase Tibetan culture. Rather, the Tibetan Government in Exile is operating under an agenda of "ethnonationalism" and has resorted to hyperbolic claims about China's intentions toward Tibet. Sautman provides discussion on Chinese policies toward Tibet as well as statistics and examples demonstrating that the Tibetan population is being given freedoms to preserve its identity.

Singh, Sonal. 2004. "Tears from the Land of Snow: Health and Human Rights in Tibet." *The Lancet* 364 (9438): 1009.

Annotation: This article summarizes the health conditions of Tibetans in the TAR region. Data demonstrates that the health of Tibetans is far behind that of Han Chinese due to factors that include lack of infrastructure, nutritional deficiencies, and high medical fees in regional hospitals. While it is clear Tibetans health lags behind, this fact is hidden by the practice of lumping in Tibetan health data with Chinese data.

Smith, Jr., Warren W. 2008. China's Tibet? Autonomy or Assimilation. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Annotation: The author of this book argues that China will not grant Tibet autonomy. He provides a history of China-Tibet relations and discusses various political agreements between the two regions to give the reader context and to support his claim. The author argues that China's actions have shown that any autonomy granted thus far is in name only, though Tibetans continue to hope true autonomy will, at some point, be realized.

Sperling, Elliot. 2004. "The Tibet-China Conflict: History and Polemics." in The East-West Center of Washington's Policy Studies. Washington, DC.

Annotation: The author of this article describes the China-Tibet controversy as a dispute over history. He explores the veracity of modern day claims about historical territory and the nature of China and Tibet's relationship. The author examines China's claim that Tibet has been part of its territory since the 13th century, Tibet's position that it had a "priest-patron" religious relationship with China, and the Dalai Lama's claim that China invaded Tibetan territory in 1949. He finds claims from both sides suspect and provides detailed evidence supporting his reasoning.

Sperling, Elliot. 2009. "China Digs in Its Heels in Tibet." *Far Eastern Economic Review* 172 (3): 48-51.

Annotation: In this well-written and convincing article, the author discusses how, in January 2009, the Chinese government revealed its plans to create "Serfs Emancipation Day" to commemorate the 1959 disbanding of the Tibetan government. The author points out how this gesture underscores the Chinese government's insistence on framing their "Tibet Policy" in their own terms, i.e., one that uncompromisingly touts China as Tibet's savior. The author discusses pre-1959 conditions in Tibet and argues that Tibetans were not in the "hell on earth" situation the Chinese government continually insists upon. Furthermore, China ignores its own questionable human rights issues as it points its finger at Tibet's historical government.

Sudbury, Jill. 2008. "Apparitions of Red Horses: Narratives of Destruction in Bodongpa Monasteries in Central Tibet," in F. Pirie and T. Huber (eds.), Conflict and Social Order in Tibet and Inner Asia. Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill, NV.

Annotation: This chapter in a larger book of essays discusses the longstanding impact the destruction of monasteries in Tibet during the 1950s and the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s had on Tibetans and Tibetan monks. Short case studies are given to demonstrate how the destruction of monasteries, central to Tibetan Buddhism, reinforced Tibetan attitudes of antipathy toward the Chinese. The author also discusses how Tibetans view these events through the lens of their religion.

The Associated Press. 2009. "China Tells US to Back Off After Dalai Lama Award." *The Washington Post* (October 9).

Annotation: The Associated Press reports that China was angered over American lawmakers giving the Dalai Lama an award for his human rights efforts. China felt the United States was "meddling in its domestic affairs" and has been urging foreign governments to refuse to meet the Dalai Lama. This article is interesting in that it brings to light recent action on behalf of the Chinese government to suppress the Dalai Lama's message and to turn international community leaders against him.

US Senate, 110th Congress. 2008. "The Crisis in Tibet: Finding a Path to Peace." Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Washington DC: US Government Printing Office. Available online: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/congress/index.html>

Annotation: This government publication is a verbatim record of a hearing before the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations that took place on April 23, 2008. The hearing addressed China's human rights abuses towards Tibetans in light of the March 2008 protests on the 49th anniversary of the Tibetan uprising that began in 1959. Various senators, actor Richard Gere, the envoy of the Dalai Lama, and others presented their case to the chairman of the committee, Senator Barbara Boxer. The testimonials are strongly pro-Tibetan with consensus that China's human rights abuses towards Tibetans are unacceptable.

Wong, Edward. 2009. "Chinese Rule in Tibet Creates Specter of Dueling Dalai Lamas." *The New York Times* (June 7).

Annotation: This article summarizes the attempt of the Chinese government to override the 14th Dalai Lama and his exiled government's chosen successor. The Chinese government has, in the past, selected its own Tibetan lamas who are willing to support the Chinese Communist Party. Though the Chinese government claims that all Dalai Lamas in the past have traditionally undergone a government approval process before becoming official, the Tibetan community fears the true intention behind China's uninvited involvement in the selection of the 15th Dalai Lama is to further its control over Tibetans and their culture.

Yan, Hao. 2000. "Tibetan Population in China: Myths and Facts Re-examined." *Asian Ethnicity* 1 (1): 11-36.

Annotation: There is much controversy over claims of a diminishing Tibetan population, genocide, forced birth control, and intentional migration of Han Chinese into Tibet. At the same time, the author of this article notes that demographers have paid little attention to these issues. The author presents evidence of poor data collection methods and provides what he believes is more accurate data that contradicts most of the above claims. The author concludes that what are commonly considered "facts" about Tibet-China relations are unsupported by data, and proposes that the true conflict lies between China's modernization and Tibetan nationalist desires to preserve Tibet. At the same time, the author agrees that Tibet should be allowed cultural preservation.

Yi, Lin. 2008. *Cultural Exclusion in China: State Education, Social Mobility, and Cultural Difference*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.

Annotation: The author addresses the struggles minority groups in China face within the standardized educational system that is predicated on Han majority culture. He argues that it is difficult for minority groups to advance in school and/or use their education to advance their positions in society due to a lack of "cultural capital" that relegates minorities to the periphery of mainstream Chinese educational and social realms. For example, Tibetan children face racism in school and, as a result, view their people as less capable and their culture as backward and inferior. Tibetans also face the dilemma of receiving education in mainstream schools that can dilute Tibetan identity. The author addresses the disconnect between law and action on the part of the Chinese government. Though laws are in place to protect minorities and their cultural rights, the enforcement of these laws is sorely lacking. This book offers an insightful and in-depth look into the social mobility challenges minorities in China face.