

The Babas are Dead:
Street Talk and Contemporary Views of Leaders in Tibet

Robert Barnett
East Asian Institute,
Columbia University, New York
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In a memorable essay some 16 years ago Melvyn Goldstein demonstrated the value for students of Tibet of studying popular street songs.¹ His account of pre-1959 Lhasa presented popular quatrains as a vehicle used by Tibetans in the capital to satirise the élite and to convey veiled political opinions, living as they did under a regime where open political dissent or ridicule would have been dangerous. In that respect the situation has perhaps not greatly changed, and Lhasa Tibetans still customarily make political comments through coded and often ironic remarks. In this paper I look at a single phrase which, while it is part of popularly generated street talk rather than the élite-produced songs collected by Goldstein,² is used by Lhasa Tibetans in a not similar way to comment on the political leadership today. I treat this text as a multi-layered commentary by its users on the political process, as a key indicating various perceptions of the current Tibetan élite, and as a popular tool for interpreting political change.

My aim here is partly to make a preliminary step towards asking how Tibetans in Tibet, or in this case certain groups of Tibetans in Lhasa, view Tibetans in the leadership and their various political strategies, and by so doing to underline the importance that I think should be attached in any such study to that form of knowledge and opinion, however subjective it might seem. I wanted also to find a way to describe the post-1950 Tibetan élite and its composition, primarily as a means to view the character and the anatomy of the leadership there today.

Initially I tried to establish if the traditional model used by the Communist Party in its writings and by western China scholars to describe the nationality élite in modern China is still used by Tibetans as a viable mode of description for the dis/placement of their leaders in the modern hierarchy. That model, best described by June Dreyer in her remarkably insightful 1972 essay on minority élites, viewed leaders in terms of generations – that is, it located them in one or other agreed phases of revolutionary history, according to their date of entry into the Party or into the political élite.³ In that model their degree of heroism and prestige generally diminished as their date of entry approached the present day, with a watershed around 1949 (or arguably 1950 in the case of cadres in Tibet).⁴

Table 1: Generational Model: Sample of Current Leaders by Date of Admission to the Party			
Names which are inset are of Chinese officials; bold indicates current TAR positions . This list shows a sample only.			
Entered Party	Born	Name (Age at Enrolment)	Position
Long March (Dates in this section are of involvement in the Long March not of admission to the Party) ⁵			
1936	c1918	Tashi Wangchug (18)	former Deputy Governor, Qinghai
1936	-	Hu Zonglin (Rinchen Sonam)	former Chairman, TAR Congress
1936	-	Tian Bao (Sangye Yeshe)	former Governor, TAR
1936	-	Yang Dongsheng (Sherab Dondrub)	former Dep Party Sec, TAR (died)
1936	1918	Sha Nai (Sonam) (18)	former Governr, Kandze Pr (died)
Pre-1950			
1949	1921	Phuntsog Wanggyal (18)	NPC Nationalities Committee ⁶
1948Ch		1931 Cui Jiguo (17)	vice-chair, TAR Congress
1949Ch		1930 Wang Hailin (19)	vice-chair, CPPCC TAR
1949Ch		1937 Li Weilun (12)	vice-chair, TAR Congress
1949	1925	Dorje Tseten (24)	former Governor, TAR
1949	1931	Yangling Dorje (18)	former Deputy Governor, Sichuan
Early 1950s: Co-operation with Traditional Government			
1952Ch		1931 Tian Fujun (21)	vice-chair, TAR Congress
1953	1932	Lu Kejian (21)	Chairman, Gansu Congress
1954	1929	Huanjue Cenam (Paljor Soman) (25)	Chairman, Qinghai Congress
1954	1932	Yang Maojia (f.) (22)	vice-chair, Qinghai Congress
1954	1936	Tseten (18)	vice-chair, Qinghai Congress
1955	1932	Doba (23)	Party Discipline Inspect'n Cttee, Qinghai
1955	1933	Luo Tongda (Lobsang Dawa) (22)	Chairman, Sichuan Congress
1955	1936	Kelsang Dorje (19)	vice-chair, Qinghai Congress
Late 1950s			
1955	1940	Tsering Samdrub (15)	vice-chair, TAR Government
1956Ch		1932 Zhou Qishun (24)	Secretary, TAR PSB
1956	1926	Chintrung Gyaltzen Phuntsog (30)	CPPCC, TAR
1956	1931	Pema Tenzin (25)	vice-chair, CPPCC Qinghai
1956	1932	Gyaltzen Norbu (24)	former Governor TAR (to 1998)
1956	1933	(Kelsang) Namgyal (23)	vice-chair, TAR Congress
1956	1933	Zheng Ying (Sonam Norbu) (23)	vice-chair, TAR Congress
1956	1936	Pema Dorje (20)	head of PSB, TAR (died 1996)
1956	1937	Buchung (19)	executive vice-chair, TAR Congress
1956	1938	Xiang Yang (Lha Nang) (18)	vice-chair, TAR Government
1957Ch		1933 Xu Hongsen (24)	former dep'y Head, TAR United Front
1957	1933	Yang Youcai (Tashi Choephel) (24)	Prosecutor, TAR
1957	1936	Karma Tseten (Major-General) (21)	Dep'y Commander, Tibet Military Dist
1958Ch		1932 Yang Chaoji (26)	Head Education, TAR (died 1997)
1958	1938	Lobsang Tenzin (20)	Head, United Front, TAR ⁷
Democratic Reforms/Suppression of the Revolt/Great Leap			
1959Ch		1936 Gong Daxi (23)	vice-chair, TAR Congress
1959	1937	Pasang (f.) (22)	Deputy Secretary, TAR
1960	1939	Budorje (21)	vice-chair, TAR Government
1960	1939	Dorje Tsering (21)	former Chair TAR, now Minister PRC
1960	1939	Gyatso (21)	Executive vice-chair, TAR Governmnt
1960	1942	Lhagpa Phuntsog (18)	vice-chair, TAR Government
1961	1937	Tseten Drolma (f.) (24)	vice-chair, CPPCC TAR
1961	1938	Raidi (23)	Executive Deputy Secretary
1961	1939	Dondrub (22)	vice-chair, TAR Government
Interim: Consolidation			
1963	1943	Lobsang Dondrub (20)	vice-chair, TAR Government
1965Ch		1941 Chen Kuiyuan (24)	Secretary, TAR
1965	1946	Li Dekui (19)	Chief Procurator, Gansu
1965	1946	Tenzin (19)	Deputy Secretary, TAR
Cultural Revolution			
1968	1946	Pema (22)	Deputy Governor, Qinghai
1972	1942	Sangye Gya (32)	Deputy Secretary, Qinghai
1972	1942	Tuthob Dorje (32)	Dep'y Minister, Nationalities Comm'ssn
1972	1944	Bai Zhao (Zhao Weidong) (30)	President, Higher Court, TAR
1972	1944	Lieque (Legchog) (30)	Governor, TAR
1973Ch		1945 Liang Gongqing (28)	vice-chair, TAR Government
1975Ch		1941 Sun Qiwen (34)	vice-chair, TAR Government
1975Ch		1950 Yang Song (25)	vice-chair TAR Government

Socialist Modernisation			
1979Ch		1947 Guo Jinlong (32)	Executive Deputy Secretary, TAR
1981	1947	Ou Zegao Gutsurtsang (34)	Deputy Governor, Sichuan

Not surprisingly, therefore, the generational model is breaking down as a contemporary tool; indeed, I have heard Tibetan party members in recent years describe it as a form of deception by the Party, in part because it implied promises to older cadres that were allegedly not kept. I wanted therefore to see if other models or conceptions might be emerging among Tibetans by which to describe their leaders and their groupings and their rise to or fall from power. This process would, I hoped, also indicate underlying structures and dynamics of affiliation within the leadership in Tibet, and perhaps even point to the ideas or viewpoints with which different leaders and groupings can be identified.⁸

What I found was that this single aphorism outlined a popular view of the élite that is nuanced and sophisticated, rather more so than representations by external parties that have depicted Tibetans inside Tibet as either collaborators or martyrs according to the values held by the perceiver. I found that the text I explored could be shown to have what I call an “embedded” quality – that is, that it carried a wealth of historical reference and contextual understanding - and that it indicated an interpretative skill among its users, in that they seem to have analysed detailed shifts in the élite as indicators of major political outcomes, apparently with great accuracy. At the same time, the phrase seemed to me to indicate an alternative conception of élite formation besides the traditional generational model, as well an ironic commentary on what might be called a heroic/modern shift in world-view and ideology within the leadership.

Definitions

Firstly, I should offer definitions for some of the terms I have used in this text. I am using the word Tibet in the sense broadly described by Hugh Richardson as “ethnographic Tibet”⁹ - that is, those areas primarily or traditionally occupied by Tibetans.¹⁰ When the term Tibet is used in a Chinese phrase or citation, or as part of an official Chinese title, such as the Tibet Communist Party, I have intended it to be understood in its more limited, official Chinese sense - that is, as synonymous with what is known since 1965 as the Tibet Autonomous Region (the TAR). Although the majority of Tibetans live outside the TAR in the areas traditionally known as Kham and Amdo,¹¹ roughly corresponding to the Tibetan autonomous areas within Sichuan and Qinghai respectively,¹² in this paper I have addressed the situation within what is now called the TAR.¹³

I have used the term Tibetans to describe those of Tibetan ethnicity, and the word Chinese, when applied to individuals, to describe those of Chinese ethnicity, in the same way as the word Han is used by modern Chinese writers.¹⁴ When speaking of institutions or policies as Chinese, I refer to the Chinese state rather than to ethnicity.

As for the composition of the élite,¹⁵ I have understood this in the way that I have found it presented by Chinese sources: essentially it is seen as comprising those holding senior positions in the five bodies or types of bodies that make up the power-structure of the Chinese state. These

are the Party, the "Political system" (the Government and the Congress (the NPC)), the Military, the United Front Organisations (notably the People's Political Consultative Conference (the CPPCC)) and the "Mass Organisations".¹⁶ Like most writers, I have assumed that ultimate power and authority lie in the hands of the Party and the Military, and that the other bodies play functional, token or subsidiary roles.

My main source for this study has been those Tibetans from Lhasa and elsewhere to whom I spoke about these issues; regrettably, since such questions are regarded as sensitive by the authorities in Tibet, I cannot cite them by name or give details as to their backgrounds. I can only say that, though small in number, cross-checking between them produced an array of similar views on this subject and has given me some confidence in these findings despite the lack of open sources.¹⁷ I have been able to check many details in official Chinese lists of leaders, notably the TAR volume of the *Zuzhishi ziliao* series, an internal publication issued by the TAR Party Committee on Party History in 1993, as well as publications which I used for my study *Leaders in Tibet*, mostly official, described in the introduction to that book.¹⁸

I should add a brief reminder of the main events in recent élite history in the TAR, the area discussed in this paper: in 1980 Hu Yaobang, then General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party, visited Lhasa and ordered most Chinese cadres to be replaced by Tibetans.¹⁹ He initiated a period of liberalisation which included Tibetan-oriented development and some Tibetan-language education, under the aegis of the then Panchen Lama, who had been released from prison three years earlier. In 1985, for the first time in the TAR, a non-Chinese cadre, Wu Jinghua, a member of the Yi nationality, was appointed as Party Secretary. Both he and the liberalisation policy came under attack from conservatives, especially after pro-independence demonstrations in Lhasa after 1987. Wu Jinghua was replaced in 1989 by an ethnic Chinese official, Hu Jintao, and the city was under martial law for 13 months until May 1990. Chen Kuiyuan, Chinese but brought up and stationed until then in Inner Mongolia, replaced Hu as Party Secretary of the TAR in 1992 and initiated rapid economic reforms which led to an increase in Chinese migration into urban areas. In 1994 the Third National Forum on Work in Tibet sanctioned the policies being implemented by Chen, including one attacking the Dalai Lama and another "adapting Tibetan Buddhism to socialism", which led in 1996 to the three-year "patriotic education" campaign in monasteries. The Panchen Lama's death in 1989 had led to the dismemberment of many of the reform policies initiated by him under the patronage of Hu Yaobang ten years earlier. Chen, seen widely as a "conservative" or "hard-liner", is still in power at the time of writing, although rarely present in Tibet because of illness; his deputy and the highest placed Tibetan in the TAR is Raidi, who rose to power during the Cultural Revolution.

Street Talk and Territory

The phrase which I have used as a guide to describing the process of élite formation in the TAR is one which seems to me particularly rich in interpretative value - that is, it indicates not only popular perceptions of the role of Tibetans in the political apparatus but also ways in which historical and other material can be fruitfully read to comment on the political system and on policy changes. It is a four syllable epigram that Lhasa Tibetans often use when referring to current leadership appointments and dismissals among Tibetans: "*Ba shi Hor lang*".²⁰ Literally, it

means "The *Babas* are dead, the *Horpas* are rising". *Babas* are Tibetans from Bathang, the town in eastern Kham on the main route that runs through western Sichuan (or Xikang, as it was known between 1935 until 1955 when it was a separate province) to the eastern border of central Tibet.²¹ The word *Horpa* can be used to refer in general to Tibetans from the high plateau area, and is used very differently in different areas of Tibet,²² but in Lhasa it refers approximately to people from Nagchu, now a prefecture within the high plateau-nomadic area to the north of the capital, lying between the Lhasa valleys and the south-western borders of Qinghai.²³

The phrase "*Ba shi Hor lang*", which has been current in Lhasa throughout the 1990s and probably since at least the mid-1980s, describes the diminishing role played by Tibetans from Bathang in the élite at that time, and the increasing prominence of Tibetans from Nagchu. At the simplest level of interpretation, therefore, this suggests that in the perception of some Lhasa Tibetans, leaders are related to their territory and that élite change at least among Tibetan leaders in the TAR can be best understood by looking at where leaders were born.²⁴ The initial impression, therefore, is that territoriality is an important element of leadership-perception among Tibetans, just as it was in earlier phases of Tibetan history.²⁵

I have been able to ascertain the birthplaces of some forty Tibetans with current or recent senior positions in the TAR or in China. Of these, three are from Nagchu - Raidi, Tenzin and Yungdrung Gawa - and three from Bathang - Phuntsog Wangyal, Namgyal and Gyaltsen Norbu.²⁶ These six people are the most conspicuous remaining representatives of the Bathang and Nagchu contingents referred to in the phrase. This data, however rudimentary, already throws up an anomaly: if the numbers of leaders from these two areas are so small, why have they become the focus of a popular street slogan which is apparently used to signify a major change in the élite? Indeed, this data does not appear to support the street slogan's implication that the *Babas* are out of power, since it shows that two of them, Gyaltsen Norbu and Namgyal, were still in very senior positions throughout the time that this slogan was current. What is more, Gyaltsen Norbu, until his retirement in 1998, had since 1990 occupied the highest position in the TAR Government, as well as being one of the three executive Deputy Party Secretaries in the region, a position that made him the second highest Tibetan cadre in the regional Party. Even the third of this group, Phuntsog Wangyal, although older, still enjoys a nominally senior role in the National People's Congress in Beijing. Why then does the "*Ba shi Hor lang*" slogan speak of the decline of powerholders from Bathang?

Table 2: Territorial Model: Sample of Tibetan Leaders in the TAR by Birthplace			
Entries in bold show current TAR power-holders ; other entries show retired, CPPCC or non-TAR officials.			
C = national level official, S= Sichuan official, Q= Qinghai official			
Birthplace	Party	Born	Position
Amdo Kumbum	C1949	1925 Dorje Tseten	Former Chair TAR, Head Tibet Inst Bjng
Amdo Do-wi	1956	1938 Xiang Yang (Lha-nang)	Vice-chair, TAR Govnmnt
Amdo Sungchu	C1960	1939 Dorje Tsering	Minister Civil Affairs, former Govnr TAR
Amdo Do-wi	-	1916 Yabshi Sonam Drolma (f.)	Vice-chair, CPPCC

(Sichuan Kham)			
Kham Bathang	C1939	1921 Phuntsog Wanggyal	NPC Nationalities Committee
Kham Bathang	1956	1932 Gyaltzen Norbu	former Gov'nr TAR; Nationalities Cmsn
Kham Bathang	1956	1933 Namgyal (Gesang Langjie)	Vice-chair, TAR Congress
Kham Dechen	1957	1933 Yang Youcai (Tashi Choephel)	Chief Procurator, TAR
Kham Derge	1957	1936 Karma Tseten (Major-General)	Dep'y Commander, Tibet Military Dt.
Kham Payul	1956	1933 Zheng Ying (Sonam Norbu)	Vice-chair, TAR Congress
Kham Litang	-	1940 Phagpa-lha Geleg Namgyal	Chair, TAR CPPCC; Vice Chair, NPC
(TAR Kham)			
Kham Chamdo	-	1918 Bomi Rinpoche	Ganden Tripa; China Buddhist Ass'tn
Kham Drayab	S1949	1931 Yangling Dorje	CPPCC Sichuan, former Dep Gov'nr
Kham Dzogang	1960	1939 Gyamco	Exec Vice-chair TAR Government
Kham Gonjo	1955	1940 Tsering Samdrub	Vice-chair, TAR Government
Kham Tengchen	1960	1939 Budorje	Vice-chair, TAR Government
Kham Jomda	1972	1944 Bai Zhao (Zhao Weidong)	President, Higher Court, TAR
Kongpo Nang	-	1924 Gonbasar Thubten Jigdra	CPPCC, TAR
Kongpo Minling	-	1925 Changdrong Tashi Dorje	CPPCC, TAR
Kongpo Pome	1956	1936 Pema Dorje	Head, PSB, TAR (died 1996)
Lhokha	1959	1937 Pasang (f.)	Deputy Secretary, TAR
Lhokha	-	1943 Tsering Drolkar (f.)	Vice-chair, TAR Government
(TAR: U)			
Lhasa	C-	1910 Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme	former Chairman TAR
Lhasa	-	1915 Lhalu Tsewang Dorje	CPPCC TAR
Lhundrub	1956	1926 Chintrung Gyaltzen Phuntsog	CPPCC TAR
Lhasa	-	1927 Chapei Kelsang Wangdu	CPPCC TAR
Lhasa	C1972	1942 Tudop Dorje	Dep'y Minister, Nationalities Comm'ssn
Nyemo	-	1939 Samding Dorje Palmo (f.)	Vice-chair, TAR Congress
Lhasa	1963	1943 Lobsang Dondrub	Vice-chair, TAR Government
Nagchu	-	1937 Yungdrung Gawa	Vice-chair, TAR Congress
Nagchu	1961	1938 Raidi	Executive Deputy Secretary, TAR
Nagchu	1965	1946 Tenzin	Deputy Secretary, TAR
(Tsang)			
Gyantse	S	1916 Kungsa Yedor	former Vice-Chair Kandze Pref, Sichuan
Gyantse	-	1930 Kyibug Phuntsog Tseten	Vice-chair, TAR Government
Lhartse	-	1934 Lhamon Sonam Lhundrub	Vice-chair, CPPCC TAR
Shigatse	-	1936 Sengchen Lobsang Gyaltzen	Vice-chair, TAR Congress
Shigatse	1956	1937 Buchung	Exec Vice-Chair, TAR Congress
Shigatse	1961	1937 Tseten Drolma (f.)	Vice-Chair CPPCC, TAR
Lhartse	1958	1938 Lobsang Tenzin	Head, United Front, TAR
Shetongmon	1961	1939 Dondrub	Vice-chair, TAR Government
Gyantse	1960	1942 Lhagpa Phuntsog	Vice-chair, TAR Government
Gyantse	1972	1944 Legchog	Governor, TAR

Historical Narrative: Archetypal Fall of a Baba

One answer to this question appears if we look at the slogan as a form of historical interpretation rather than as merely the description of a current incident within the leadership - that is, if we read it as deriving its power and meaning from its reference to some other, critical point in time when someone from Bathang has risen to power in Tibet only to have been eclipsed, while implying a contemporary re-enactment of that moment. If we look at the modern history of Tibet, such a narrative can be ascribed to one figure in particular: Phuntsog Wangyal, usually referred to as *Baba* Phuntsog Wangyal, or simply as Phunwang. He was one of the generation of intellectual activists in Eastern Tibet before 1949 who had been educated in the schools of the KMT and politicised by contact with underground communists in China.²⁷ In the late 1930s and early 1940s he had tried to establish a communist party among Tibetans in Kham, but later had to flee to Lhasa, where

he had been allowed to teach Chinese and to head, without revealing his commitment to communism, an informal salon of progressive intellectuals and aristocrats; he had been forced to return to his hometown when the declaration of the PRC in July 1949 led the Tibetan government to expel all Chinese and their sympathisers from Lhasa and from as much of Tibet as it administered.

Back in Bathang his organisational skills and commitment were immediately recognised by the United Front, so that within months he had been appointed to the 15-member Tibet Working Committee, the shadow body that in reality controlled Tibet for nine years after the 1950 invasion. He was the only Tibetan to serve on that committee, other than Tian Bao, a member of the earlier and greatly vaunted generation of Tibetans who had taken part in the Long March, who was nominated to it *in absentia* for a brief period. Phuntsog Wangyal was also placed on the South-west Military-Political Council, appointed a director of the Military Propaganda Department in the region, and named as a deputy director of the United Front in Central Tibet. It is unwise to assess the significance in the power-structure of any official in China from their titles, and especially so with a member of a non-Chinese nationality, but it seems that that Phuntsog Wangyal is regarded as having held these positions not as a figurehead but, at least in popular perception, as an actual or as a potential power-holder.

If so, his appointments to the Tibet Work Committee and the South-West Military-Political Council alone could be said to have placed him in what is possibly the highest level position attained by a Tibetan in Tibet, and to have made him a candidate for a really senior position as he became older. These early appointments suggest that he alone among Tibetans was really trusted by the Chinese leaders at this or perhaps any stage. The Tibetans of the Long March generation must also have enjoyed the trust by the Chinese communists, but they were either not given such high positions or were given positions high in status but with less access to power; some Tibetans say that Chinese leaders thought it too dangerous to let such prestigious figures become too powerful, or perhaps they lacked the educational background to retain senior office other than in name.²⁸

The importance of Phuntsog Wangyal to Tibetans seems to have been that his achievements in the 1950s indicated that it was possible for a Tibetan to be granted and to wield real power, a possibility that implied that Tibetans could and would be allowed in the future to run Tibet. He is thus emblematic of the relatively conciliatory stream within Chinese nationality policies that had offered a more than vestigial notion of Tibetan autonomy during the 1950s, and which re-emerged with Hu Yaobang's reforms in the early 1980s. The primary significance of "*Ba shi Hor lang*" therefore seems to be that it conveys a sense of hurt or betrayal felt by those who, whether they were themselves committed to reform or merely to seeing the best viable option for the country in the wake of the invasion, looked to Phuntsog Wangyal as a symbol of a future self-ruled Tibet and as a guarantor of their continuing distinctive identity within the PRC. The "*Ba-Hor*" phrase, in its historical reference, thus encapsulates, I would guess, popular anger or disappointment felt at the Chinese betrayal of the promise that had brokered their 1951 take-over of Tibet, which had been defined in the 17 Point Agreement and embodied in the policies and pre-

eminence of the United Front throughout the 1950s: the promise that the running of Central Tibet would remain in the hands of Tibetans. For by 1957 Phuntsog Wangyal had been purged, an early victim of the anti-Rightist campaign and its particular targeting of the United Front leadership under Li Weihan. His purging was not temporary: he was imprisoned in Beijing in 1960, and even when finally released in 1978 he had to remain in the Chinese capital, fulfilling senior but largely honorary positions, some of which he still holds. It is to his downfall that the first part of the “*Ba-Hor*” slogan is usually understood to refer.

Thus, although on the surface the phrase refers to a change in the 1980s leadership, the strength of the epigram for its speakers seems to derive from its subtextual reference to the fall of *Baba* Phuntsog Wangyal some 30 years earlier. This quality of embeddedness, this deep sense of historical context, which is so typical of popular readings of history, is one of several aspects of layered meaning or reference that can be detected beneath the apparent narrative of the “*Ba-Hor*” phrase.

Contemporary Narrative: Inevitable Fall of a Later Baba

That apparent narrative is the eclipse of Gyaltzen Norbu by Raidi in the 1980s. That episode, while describing a contemporary challenge facing a leader from Bathang, had little resonance in itself – as we have seen, Gyaltzen Norbu retained very high office in the area until 1998. In any case, although Gyaltzen Norbu came from Bathang in the 1950s, he is not as far as I know imbued with popular reverence or admiration by Tibetans, and was not even particularly well known before his elevation to the position of Governor of the TAR in 1990.²⁹ He had worked his passage gradually to the top of the leadership ladder by holding a series of county and prefectural positions over thirty years in Chamdo and Shigatse, and later as procurator-general of the TAR, becoming a deputy Party Secretary of the region only in 1985.³⁰ Indeed, the representation of Gyaltzen Norbu as eclipsed by Raidi is inaccurate insofar as it suggests that he was at some point senior to Raidi. Raidi, although six years younger than Gyaltzen Norbu, has been in effect a party secretary in the TAR since 1975, and has been on the Central Committee of the national CCP, at least as an alternate, since 1977. Gyaltzen Norbu received his highest level appointment in 1994, when he was named as one of the three executive deputy secretaries of the TAR Party,³¹ but Raidi had held that position since 1991, and was always listed before him. Even though he had joined the Party five years earlier, Gyaltzen Norbu had been junior to Raidi since at least the time of Raidi's rapid promotion from Nagchu to Lhasa during the Cultural Revolution.

The reference in the “*Ba hor*” remark to the surpassing of Gyaltzen Norbu by Raidi in the late 1980s, when the slogan appears to have become current, is therefore probably comic in intent, since it describes something that keeps on happening. It has additional ironic force because the Chinese authorities from 1990 onwards presented Gyaltzen Norbu as the most senior figure in the TAR, namely the Governor, when everyone knew in the

Chinese system, both the Party secretary and Raidi as seniormost deputy Secretary held more senior positions. In addition, there appears to be a more potent historical irony: the fact that the *Horpa* Raidi remains in the élite at all. As a leader from the Cultural Revolution generation, he should have been purged in the early 1980s, as was the case with the rest of that cohort in China. That he has retained his position and his status is a comment on the bizarrely specific politics of élite formation in Tibet, that has tolerated an enclave of relatively unreconstructed Cultural Revolution cadres twenty years after the rest of China appears to have reconstituted itself.

Popular Readings: Predicting Outcomes through Leadership Change

"*Ba shi Hor lang*" thus refers on one level to the survival of Raidi despite his unlikely credentials, and probably in an ironic way to the inevitable failure of Gyaltzen Norbu to surpass him even though he had become Governor of the region; at the same time it compares the fall of this *Baba* to its precursor, the downfall of Phuntsog Wangyal in the 1950s. This is not a chance comparison: in the perception of many Chinese as well as Tibetans, the early 1980s represented, and was represented as, an attempt by Beijing to offer the TAR the same promise that had been made in 1950 and abandoned in 1959.³² In fact the original United Front concession to Central Tibet appears on a closer reading to have collapsed not, as is generally supposed, with the Uprising of 1959 and the decision to implement the until then delayed Democratic Reforms, but with the purging of Phuntsog Wangyal and the challenge to Li Wei-han two years earlier. Similarly, the anomalous survival of Raidi as a leading figure in the mid-1980s despite his Cultural Revolution background can be read as a sign that the much-publicised reinstatement of a conciliatory regime was not wholly matched by the re-forming of the leadership and was no more likely to survive than was the 1950s effort after the 1957 purge. These re-readings of history have extensive significance, since they imply that popular unrest in both periods was a response to and not the precipitant of policy contraction, as is usually claimed.³³ The street slogan suggests a popular sense that in both cases the policy retrenchment could be detected, and even predicted, by closely observing leadership appointments, apparently with considerable accuracy.

Indeed, there is other evidence besides Raidi's survival that the tide against the 1980s reforms had begun to assert itself in late 1985, well before the outbreak of street protests in Lhasa two years later. 1985 was a hopeful moment - 10,000 Tibetans had been allowed for the first time to travel on pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya in India to hear the Dalai Lama teach, and there were rumours that the Dalai Lama was due to pay a visit that year. In fact negotiations with the Dalai Lama failed,³⁴ and permits for pilgrimage to India were not issued on anything like that scale again.³⁵ But within the pattern of leadership appointments there was also an indication of the imminent failure, for the second time, of the concessional regime: Yin Fatang, then the TAR Party Secretary, was to be replaced, and there were expectations, at least within certain circles, that the position of Party Secretary would be given not only to a civilian for the first time, but to a Tibetan, namely to

Phuntsog Wangyal, who had been appointed to a relatively senior position within the NPC in Beijing.³⁶ If he had become regional Party Secretary he would have been the first Tibetan to hold such a position anywhere in China, and it would have been seen as the decisive routing of the faction that purged him and Li Weihang in 1957; it would have represented the fulfilment, at least in symbolic terms, of the promise implied by the 17 Point Agreement in 1951 and in effect repeated by Hu Yaobang in 1980.³⁷ In the event the post of TAR Party Secretary did not go to a Chinese cadre — it went, as we have seen, to Wu Jinghua, a moderate who was a member of the Yi nationality - but it did not go to Phuntsog Wangyal or any other Tibetan.

Although barely perceptible to the outside world, this second rejection of Phuntsog Wangyal was, in a minor but symbolic way, a sort of replay of the 1957 purge, as well as a precursor of Raidi's eclipse of his fellow *Baba*, Gyaltsen Norbu, in the late 1980s and early 1990s. If, as I believe, the slogan was already circulating in the 1980s, it accurately described the trouncing of the moderate faction that only became fully clear to outsiders in the early 1990s with the rise of Chen Kuiyuan, the further promotion of Raidi, and the pronouncements of the Third Forum on Work in Tibet in July 1994.³⁸ In this light, the slogan thus can be read as a sort of barometer of serio-comic hopelessness, summing up the recurrent failure in these periods — the 1950s, the 1980s and the 1990s - of the conciliatory approach to nationality policy.

Outsiders and Military Factions³⁹

There is another level of historical reference or commentary embedded within the "*Ba-Hor*" slogan, which becomes clearer if we consider the territorial groupings among leaders in terms of the traditional Tibetan notion of the "three provinces" of U-Tsang (roughly Central Tibet), Kham and Amdo, rather than in terms of *rdzongs* or districts like Bathang and Nagchu. If we include within Kham the traditional area of Chamdo west of the Drichu (the Yangtse), 17 of the 42 Tibetans in my sample of current Tibetan leaders whose birthplaces are known, or about 40%, come from either Kham or Amdo (see Table 2), a remarkably high proportion, one might think, of people potentially viewed as outsiders to find in the upper levels of the élite, especially given the linguistic differences between the three areas. Even if we include only those leaders coming from east of the Drichu (that is, outside the TAR), and consider the dates at which they entered the Party, then 11 of these leaders are the remnants of the generation of Eastern cadres who joined the Party in the early 1950s and were immediately transferred to work in Central Tibet. This is striking insofar as it suggests that the Chinese authorities have still not completed what was one of their primary tasks in the 1950s, namely developing a cadre of capable indigenous leaders from Central Tibet; or, more precisely, if they have developed that contingent, they still do not trust them to run the territory.

Tibetans to whom I have spoken about the high proportion of Khampas and Amdowans in the TAR leadership have not explained this phenomenon in terms of an

effort to dilute the authority of Central Tibetans (this is anyway achieved by appointing leaders from competing regions other than Lhasa within the TAR) but, besides noting that there were no Party members and few Chinese-speakers among Tibetans in Central Tibet, have referred to a historical context similar to that we have seen embedded in the "*Ba-Hor*" phrase: the historic tensions between the military units that carried out the 1950 invasion. The specific reason that the generation of Eastern Tibetan leaders were brought to Central Tibet, and in particular the Tibetans from Bathang, arises from the fact that the Tibet invasion was a double-pronged movement carried out by two military units using two main routes running through the Eastern Tibetan areas. The 18th Corps, in particular its 52nd division, representing the South West Military Command, proceeded from Sichuan through the province of Xikang (since 1955 re-incorporated into western Sichuan) and entered Central Tibet via Kham: it therefore passed through Bathang. The 1st Field Army, under the North-West Military Command, which included much of Amdo in the territory which it liberated and controlled, attacked Central Tibet primarily by using the road through Golmud in western Qinghai. This meant that it advanced on Lhasa by travelling through Nagchu.

The Bathang contingent thus came first to central Tibet in 1950-51 as translators, facilitators, propagandists and mediators for the 18th Corps, or for its United Front arm, along with a number of other Khampas who had been recruited at different stages in the journey through western Sichuan and Xikang. The 1st Field Army brought with it a contingent of Amdowan radicals and cadres, some of whom, such as Dorje Tseten [in fact he was not with the army], are still in leadership positions in Lhasa or Beijing.⁴⁰ More importantly, perhaps, the 1st Army is seen as having created client sub-élites in the areas through which it passed, [although in Nagchu it did not stay long enough to control appointments], just as the 18th Army was the dominant force in the areas closer to its route of entry into Tibet. Leaders from Nagchu are accordingly seen, at least in an indirect way, as beneficiaries of the 1st Field Army and its circle, while leaders from Bathang are closely identified with the 18th Corps.

In addition, it is widely perceived that the appointees of the two armies were to some extent in opposition - in other words that they constituted two factions in the TAR leadership, reflecting what some observers say is an on-going low-profile factional tension between the remnants of the North-west and the South-west military commands, not just in Tibet but also at the higher levels of the Chinese leadership. In other words there is, according to this view, a long history of tension essentially between the followers of Deng Xiaoping and the followers of Peng Dehuai, the paramount figures in the South-West and North-West commands respectively. This tension was not purely over access to power; it included ideological differences which some commentators would characterise as between reformism and conservatism, the first associated with Deng and the second with Wang.

It is difficult to know if this perception of factional conflict is based on sound evidence, or if these factions are still influential in Tibet or China,⁴¹ but there is no doubt that in Central Tibet there was a formal division of power between the two armies: the Tibet Working Committee which was set up to run the new territory in fact consisted of

two separate entities with the same name, one set up by the South-west Command in Leshan, Sichuan, on 24th January 1950 under Zhang Guohua, and the other set up formally under Fan Ming by the North-west Command in June 1951.⁴² The two committees amalgamated in December 1951 after both armies finally reached Lhasa, but this brought to an end the institutional separation of powers between the two military authorities only in the sphere of civilian affairs and only in eastern central Tibet. Administration in Ngari, the westernmost prefecture of the TAR, remained for some years under the authority of what is now called the Southern Xinjiang military district, part of the North-west Military Command, now known as the Lanzhou Military Region:⁴³ until January 1980 the Party in Ngari was answerable to Urumqi and not to Lhasa.⁴⁴ The military administration of Ngari is today still governed directly by Urumqi. The TAR thus remains the only area in China, as far as I know, where the borders of a military region do not coincide with the borders of provincial administrations: the TAR is divided militarily between its eastern prefectures, which are under the authority of the Chengdu military region, and its western prefectures, which are run by the Lanzhou military region via Urumqi. It is therefore possible, or even probable, that the two military authorities retain political influence in the areas under their control, and that the appointment of senior leaders in these areas may be subject to factional tension between these two groupings; it would in fact be strange if it were not so, given the anomaly between the political and the military maps of Tibet.

Since the principal local appointees of the 18th Army included Tibetans from Bathang, and some of the principal clients of the 1st Army were from Nagchu, street talk about *Horpas* replacing *Babas* in the leadership therefore probably contains a reference to this underlying historic tension between the two military forces and their local client-élite which has long dominated the process of leadership formation in Tibet, if not in China, and which in some views continues to do so.

Local Clients of the North West Command: the Rise of Tsang

The influence of these military factions can be best viewed not directly but through their appointees. In the 1950s the United Front leaders affiliated to the 18th Army presented *Baba* Phuntsog Wangyal (and to some extent Chamdo Phagpa-lha, then still a child) as their leading Tibetan associate, with what they hoped were viable links to the Dalai Lama, while the 1st Army presented as its representative and its source of indigenous legitimation the Panchen Lama, who had been born in Qinghai, where his predecessor had fled after a dispute with Lhasa in 1923. Having such an important traditional leader as its figurehead gave the North-west Command a considerable advantage over the South-western Command; the North West grouping also had the asset of control of the major road into Lhasa as well as access to the major mineral resources in Tibet,⁴⁵ such as it had already in Xinjiang, but it had and still has a less visible presence in Lhasa. However, the relationship of the 1st Army grouping to the person of the Panchen Lama meant that its power base included not only his exile seat and birthplace in Qinghai, but also his traditional seat of authority in Shigatse, which had long played an adversarial role to

Lhasa. It also meant that the Panchen Lama's affiliates from those two areas — Qinghai and Shigatse - could expect to be among those promoted by the North-west faction,⁴⁶ alongside those from Nagchu, which lay on the 1st Army's route to Lhasa.⁴⁷

This background perhaps helps to explain why the major territorial grouping in terms of numbers, after the Khampas, that can be found among current leaders is not that of Tibetans from Nagchu but Tibetans from the Shigatse-Gyantse region - the area which Tibetans call Tsang, and which historically has been always seen as a separate power base to Lhasa. The two groupings can be seen as a joint counter-balance to leaders from Lhasa, who have never been allowed to regain prominence, as well as to leaders affiliated historically to the South-west command.

In the 1950s this kind of counterposing of regional groupings within the élite was arranged quite openly by the incoming Chinese administration, which created after 1951 a hybrid system of government called the "co-existence of the three leading bodies", one representing the *kashag* of the Dalai Lama, one representing the *nangma gang* or inner office of the Panchen Lama, and a third representing the traditional rulers of those areas of Kham west of the Driчу (identified by the Chinese with the person of Chamdo Phagpa-lha Gelek Namgyal). This novel arrangement brought the tensions between Lhasa and Shigatse into the government structure; such power-balancing concerns have clearly played a prominent part in Chinese institution-building in Tibet.⁴⁸ The survival in the leadership of deputy secretary Pasang, another Cultural Revolution cadre regarded as relatively uneducated, is sometimes cited as another example. Even in the late 1980s the Chinese authorities responded to unrest in Lhasa by promoting Shigatse in the press as a site of loyalty compared to the capital.

Today a disproportionately high number of TAR leaders come from the Tsang area, suggesting that what we are seeing now is the gradual placement in the TAR élite of Tibetans from that area, increasingly so as the search for trustworthy Tibetans becomes (apparently) more difficult, and as the death of the 10th Panchen Lama removes from the *Tsangpa* group any leader of stature who could divide their loyalties. *Tsangpa* presence in the Lhasa leadership was further accelerated in 1995, when the dispute over the successor to the 10th Panchen Lama created a major crisis for the Chinese administration in the TAR because, perhaps for the first time, Lhasa and Shigatse were united against Chinese interests. The state responded by imprisoning Chadrel Rinpoche, the leading religious figure in the Tsang region, and by rapidly promoting Shigatse loyalists of lesser standing like Sengchen and Samdrup into the Lhasa élite.⁴⁹

Shigatse and Nagchu leaders may traditionally have been both clients of the North-west Command or its affiliates, and in theory could still be. Current street wisdom in Lhasa, however, now speaks of the *Tsangpa* cohort as *arrivistes* of little ability or education promoted (its most cultured members being excluded) to balance or complement the growing power of the Nagchu contingent; who has arranged this promotion is not explained, as far as I can tell. But a new slogan is now frequently heard describing the increasing appointment of Shigatse officials in Lhasa since 1995: "*Hor shi Gtsang lang*" —

The *Horpas* are dead and the *Tsangpas* are rising.⁵⁰ It suggests that to the street pundits of Lhasa these recurrent patterns of appointment denote the fundamental powerlessness of Tibetan sub-regional territorial groupings, manipulated by more powerful forces, such as the remnants of the former military commands, to effect state or factional needs and to contain emerging local power blocks.

***Babas* and the Horizontal-Heroic-Generational Model**

If we look in more detail at the second element in our “*Ba-Hor*” phrase - the rise of the *Horpas* - we find another anomaly besides the numerical predominance of *Tsangpa* Tibetans in the current leadership. The Tibetan in this phrase is abbreviated for euphonic effect, so that the verbs are not inflected and the nouns not numbered: it is therefore ambiguous as to whether the phrase refers to one *Baba* and one *Horpa*, or whether it refers to many. The interpretation that I have given so far has dwelt on individuals who may be the main players in the story indicated by this phrase; but the phrase is not a single level narrative, as we have already seen, and is capable of being a tale about collective entities as well. In other words, it may be taken as a description of the fall of a contingent of Bathang leaders and the rise of a Nagchu group, as well as a reference to the fall of Phuntsog Wangyal or the rise of Raidi. Although the two groups seemed statistically equivalent in their current representation, with three leaders each in the upper reaches of the Tibetan élite, looking at these two groups in more detail suggests rather fundamental differences in the way they are composed, and possibly in the way they are perceived by Tibetans.

The Bathang group was of course wider than just Phuntsog Wangyal, Namgyal and Gyaltzen Norbu: it included other *Babas* who were prominent in Lhasa in the 1950s as well as in the 1980s. The most significant of these was Lobsang Tsultrim, a key figure in the early 1960s who had been made head of the United Front in central Tibet in 1959; after the Cultural Revolution he became a vice-chairman of the TAR Government in 1979 and, at the time of his early death in November 1981, was what is now called a deputy Party secretary.⁵¹ Interestingly, from the time of the Cultural Revolution onwards he was shadowed in his career path by Raidi, both of them sitting from 1975 on the same committees in the TAR and even concurrently on its Agricultural Committee: Lobsang Tsultrim was (I would guess) the trusted appointee of the South-west Command faction to those post-cultural Revolution bodies in its bid to contain or balance the continuing hold on power of the 1970s radicals.⁵² The group itself claims that the contingent of Tibetan intellectuals and revolutionaries developed by *Baba* Phuntsog Wangyal in Kham in the 1930s and 1940s produced six provincial-level leaders, 48 prefecture-level leaders and over 100 county-level leaders.⁵³ These include Tashi Tsering, a deputy Chairman of the Sichuan People’s Congress and a leading educationalist,⁵⁴ as well as less prominent political figures such as Namgyal (also known as Kelsang Namgyal or in Chinese as Langjie), a vice chairman of the TAR Congress and a senior party figure in political-legal work; Tashi Lhamo, a deputy party secretary in Chamdo since 1977, and her husband Lobsang Namgyal, Commissioner of Chamdo since 1986.⁵⁵ Noted *Babas* in the cultural

field include the famous academic Kelsang Gyurme, a cousin of Gyaltzen Norbu, as well as the Beijing-based historian Jamphel Gyatso.⁵⁶

This group exists in the traditional sense presented by June Dreyer as a political generation - that is, its members all emerge from the same period of Party history and are linked not just by birthplace but by common experience, shared participation in a stage of the revolutionary process, and parallel career trajectories. They exist, one might say, as a horizontal group, which ages at the same time and which is assumed to share a certain common goal or set of perceptions. The *Baba* contingent benefits from the general presumption in Central Tibet, as in China as a whole, that the generation of leaders and activists involved in the early 1950s period, especially perhaps those transferred to work for long periods outside their own area, was driven by genuine idealism. In the case of Tibet, this heroising view has coalesced around the main *Baba* cadres and led to a popular presumption in some quarters that they, or at least the earlier ones, were motivated by a primary commitment to improving the welfare of Tibetan people.⁵⁷

Nagchu Leaders and Educational Virtues

The Nagchu contingent, however, seems to me quite different in composition, in its cycle of development, and in the way it is perceived. For a start its leaders are younger: Raidi was only 11 when the People's Republic was declared, and spent the 1950s studying at the Central Institute of Nationalities in Beijing (this is according to the official biographies; some of his critics insist that he is illiterate). He was not admitted to the party until 1961, and so does not benefit from the aura of dedication and commitment surrounding the early activists. He is usually associated with the Cultural Revolution, when he first came to prominence, but in fact his first senior appointment dates from 1962, when he was appointed to the Nagchu Prefectural Party Committee. He thus emerged from the aftermath of the 1959 Uprising, when the Party managers were searching for loyal recruits among the "serf" and poor peasant classes, whom they felt could be trusted more than the former aristocrats who had served as proxy leaders in the 1950s.⁵⁸ News articles about Raidi still stress today his lowly origins as a herdsman.⁵⁹ One result of this representation, however, is that Raidi, like others promoted at such times, is seen as having benefited from political opportunity, and is not popularly perceived as necessarily motivated other than by his own interests.

This is not, however, a view which is automatically applied to members of the Nagchu contingent.⁶⁰ While I do not know, for example, how Lhasans view Yungdrung Gawa, a Bonpo *trulku* from Drachen who represents the Nagchu contingent in the CPPCC, the Congress and the TAR Branch of the Chinese Buddhist Association,⁶¹ it is clear that Tenzin, the most prominent *Horpa* after Raidi, is seen in a very different light. He is associated with aspirations for Tibetan cultural development, and is widely perceived as motivated by ideals, almost the diametrical opposite of Raidi.⁶² It could be argued that Tenzin belongs to a later generation, since he is eight years younger than Raidi and

because he joined the Party in 1965, four years after Raidi, when a more reformist climate prevailed. He certainly belongs to a different contingent if assessed by career path: he graduated from Fudan University in Shanghai before working as a journalist and editor, which means he spent much of his public career in the professional sector outside the Party apparatus. But his benefit appears to accrue from the popular esteem (at least among some sectors) accorded to Tibetan leaders who are considered to be well educated, just as Raidi and Pasang are often mocked for their alleged deficiencies in language and education. This popular respect for leaders' cultural abilities applies to their Chinese language skills as well as their facility in Tibetan - among the earlier leaders, for example, Phuntsog Wangyal and Dorje Tseten were widely respected for having had, alone among Tibetan cadres, sufficient proficiency in Chinese to allow them access to the seniormost positions. This premium placed on cultural accomplishment, and the use of it as a way of distinguishing cadres, is now of course an ideologically laden affair, since the value of Tibetan language skills has become a major locus of contention, notably with the ending in 1995 of the middle school Tibetan-medium experimental classes in which had been started in the TAR just before his death by the Panchen Lama ⁶³ and with the infamous speech on artistic policy delivered by TAR Party Secretary Chen Kuiyuan in June 1997.⁶⁴ Cultural accomplishment among Tibetans has thus become in itself a form of ideological statement.

But this reverence for intellectual ability does not, it seems, contradict the perception of a particular group or cohort among the leadership based on territorial origins. Tibetans whom I have asked to identify the *Horpas* referred to in "*Ba shi Hor lang*" consider both Raidi and Tenzin as part of the *Horpa* contingent (many insist that they are related), even though they are perceived as ideologically and educationally distinct. This notion of a Nagchu contingent is not therefore coherent if defined strictly by generation or by shared perceptions: it includes people of different political eras, and of different persuasions and aspirations. It covers more than one generation in time, and more than one category by ideology or career path; it is, one might say, a vertical grouping rather than a horizontal one.

Horpas and the Vertical-Modern-Patronage Model

It therefore seems to me that the Nagchu group is viewed in a different way from the Bathang contingent, perhaps largely because its leaders entered the Party during the Democratic Reforms (the response to the 1959 Uprising), often rising to prominence during the Cultural Revolution, and so lacked the credentials of those who took part in the establishment of the People's Republic, or the invasion and initial administration of Tibet. When I sought to gain a description from Tibetan informants as to how the Nagchu group of leaders achieved their positions in the élite, I was told that the notion of revolutionary heritage was irrelevant: the perception accorded the Bathang group, seen as a political generation in the classic mode of portraying revolutionary heroes, seems to be rejected here. The rise of the Nagchu contingent should be understood, according to my informants, not in terms of historical role but in terms of patronage. The model used for the Nagchu

groups seems therefore to be a version of modernism, in that it describes the perceived degradation of principle and of notions of collectivity in favour of amoral and disparate, individualised interests.

Another difference in perception could be seen in my informants' views of Nagchu group membership: it is seen not in terms of pure territoriality or historical participation, but in terms of linkage in career path to one or other leaders from Nagchu, irrespective of actual birthplace. On the standing committee of the TAR Party there are two people with connections to Nagchu or to Raidi, currently its most successful representative, who were not, as far as we know, born there. Most prominent is Legchog, who is now a deputy Party Secretary and was promoted in 1998 to the position of Governor of the TAR; he has no known link to Nagchu, but he is said to have become close to Raidi when he worked under him in the TAR organisation department in the early 1980s.⁶⁵ Li Guangwen, another Tibetan on the Party's standing committee, has a more explicit connection with the area, since he was Party secretary of Nagchu during the late 1980s. Other current Tibetan leaders have similar connections: Thubten Tsewang, for example, now the Chief Procurator of the TAR, was a deputy party secretary in Nagchu in 1986, at the same time as Li Guangwen, and Lobsang Gyaltsen, who was made the mayor of Lhasa in 1996, was previously a senior official in Nagchu, although the details of his position there have not been published.⁶⁶

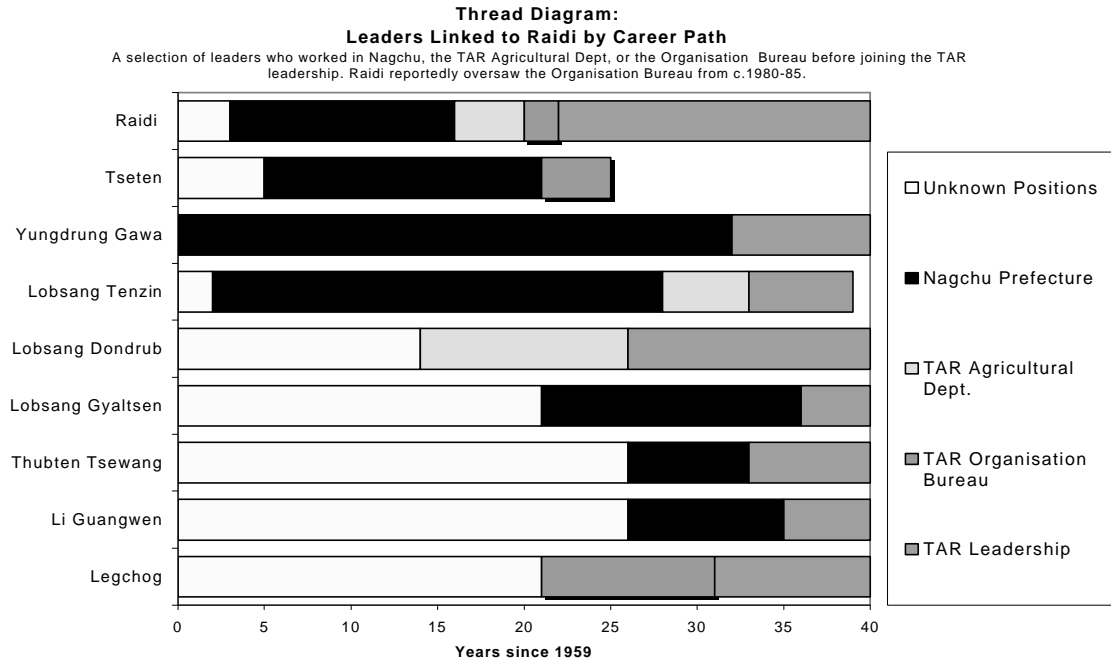
Lack of published history is, in fact, a characteristic of these officials. Almost nothing is known about the career paths of Li Guangwen, Thubten Tsewang and Lobsang Gyaltsen, apart from their presence at the highest level of the Nagchu party immediately before their promotion to the regional centre. Lack of a known history is presumably a determining factor in shaping public perception of a leader, suggesting as it does that a relatively minor official has been catapulted into senior position without having to go through the gradual stages of promotion, and therefore without having to prove ability to the public. It also supports the perception that "history" and public service are no longer relevant to leadership selection. Such views, along with accusations of corruption and self-interest, may have contributed to the popular suspicion that patronage rather than ability has become the dominant factor in the appointment of leaders, a view that may be implicit in the "*Ba shi Hor lang*" phrase.

Among the older leaders still in power there are others with connections to Raidi; these can be deduced speculatively by looking at overlaps in their career paths. Lobsang Tenzin, who was promoted to the key post of director of the TAR United Front in 1992, comes from Lhartse in Tsang, but held his first field post in Nagchu County in 1961, the year Raidi joined the party; he is the same age as Raidi and was one of the Party secretaries in Nagchu at the same time as Raidi in the early 1970s. In his case, though, it may not have been only Nagchu where a connection with Raidi might have been made: in 1987 Lobsang Tenzin became the head of the TAR Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Department, where Raidi had worked (along with *Baba* Lobsang Tsultrim) ten years earlier. Indeed, the TAR Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Department seems to have been an important office for those with career ambitions: Lobsang Dondrup, another official who in 1993

came to relatively sudden prominence when he was made the Mayor of Lhasa, had also worked there for ten years until 1982, a period which included Raidi's time in that office. When Lobsang Gyaltzen was made Mayor of Lhasa in 1996, Lobsang Dondrup was promoted to Party Secretary in Lhasa and became a vice-chairman of the TAR, while Legchog, the previous Party Secretary in Lhasa, was promoted to the rank of deputy Party Secretary of the TAR, later becoming regional Governor, as we have seen. In popular perception, according to my informants, these officials were moved into crucial positions in Lhasa and the regional hierarchy by Raidi in order to consolidate his base within the leadership.

Thread Theory

The rising Nagchu sub-group referred to in the “*Ba-Hor*” slogan therefore seems to be not so much people born in Nagchu but people linked by career path to the area and to certain departments where Raidi worked, or linked in other ways by patronage to Raidi and his cohort. This is what is called in Chinese *yi tiao xian* - a thread or piece of string, meaning the connection between a leader and the beneficiaries of his or her patronage; Tibetans refer to the patron in this kind of relationship as the *rgyab ltag* or “backing” (*houtai* [stage behind] or *houdun* in Chinese). It is a concept that is particularly helpful to us here because it allows us to perceive the Nagchu contingent in vertical terms, in other words as independent of a particular historical period: it describes a sort of rolling pattern which is not yet complete, since it can continue to gather members.



Not only that: because it is a description of a network rather than a moment it allows us to extend its story into the past or into horizontal directions, as if it were as more a web than a line with a defined moment of beginning. This is important in this case, because Raidi, despite his political skills, has no particular charisma or ideological distinctiveness - he does not conform to the traditional notion which ascribes chains of patronage to a significant historical figure, because he is not in himself significant: apart from his high position and his survival skills he is seen as having no particular political views, or even regarded as an opportunist. In other words, we need a model that will explain why Raidi exists as a senior figure at all: why did this indistinctive person not get purged in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution, and why should he appear to be the source of influence and patronage now apparently controlling the major appointments in the TAR?

Tibetan explanations which I have heard for Raidi's survival as a leader beyond the Cultural Revolution describe a thread that links him to Hu Yaobang, the national level leader who visited Tibet and initiated reforms in 1980; they thus present Raidi as the beneficiary of high-level patronage, while implying that his political views or ideological affiliations were irrelevant to his survival. One account, documented in the records of the 2nd National Forum on Work in Tibet in 1984, has it that Hu told the Forum that Raidi, then only about 46, would be suitable for a top leadership position in about 10 years time.⁶⁷ According to another version it was Hu Yaobang who had in 1980 overruled a proposal that Raidi should be purged along with other Cultural Revolution cadres. Why should Hu, seen, particularly in the Tibet context, as a reformist dedicated to reviving the conciliatory policy that characterised the 1950s dispensation there, have gone out of his way to oppose national trends and to impose on Tibetans a leader who had no apparent connection to his

own reform movement? The explanation given for this which I have heard is counter-intuitive, in the sense that it is intelligible only in terms of patronage, making no sense in terms of what we imagine (perhaps wrongly) to have been Hu's ideological inclinations.

According to these accounts, Raidi had in 1975 attended the Central Party School for a re-education course in which he was placed in the same "cell" or team as Hu Yaobang; this would explain their association and Hu's patronage since that time. In one version of the story more precise explanation is given for the link: during the re-education course Raidi was appointed as leader of the cell, which made him temporarily superior to Hu Yaobang. But (the anecdote goes) Raidi treated Hu with great respect as a revolutionary elder and tended to all his needs throughout the course, and Hu rewarded him with patronage because he had shown respect to revolutionary elders.⁶⁸

This account, whether fictional or not, illustrates one characteristic of the thread or patronage model that seems to be applied both to the Nagchu group and to much of the contemporary political élite in general: they are seen as what we might call "concept-blind". That is, the role of ideas or beliefs is largely irrelevant to the decisions of leaders of this type, as seen by the Tibetans recounting these stories. Within this model of leadership formation is contained a presumption that leaders of this kind are driven by personal or local interests. At this level, therefore, "*Ba shi Hor lang*" appears to be a compressed description of the replacement of one model of leadership formation - the politics of heroic dedication and aspiration, resulting from membership of a historical generation - by another model, which describes the promotion of leaders through the use of influence in the pursuit of self-interest and without reference to historical achievements. Even Hu Yaobang, who is described even by the Dalai Lama as a heroic idealist, is presented by Tibetans of this more recent school of thought as, in this account at least, self-serving if not ridiculous.

The Hu Yaobang thread to which these Lhasa accounts attribute Raidi's rise is not the only example of this view that promotion in Lhasa depends on patronage in Beijing. Thus Tenzin's survival in high office, despite his supposed ideological differences with the dominant group in Lhasa, is attributed to the protection of Jiang Zemin, who is said to have met him in Shanghai in 1985 when Jiang was the mayor and when Tenzin returned on a regional delegation to the city where he had been educated. Chen Kuyuan's source of survival in position is attributed anecdotally to his immediate predecessor as TAR Party Secretary — Hu Jintao, now vice-president of China and heir apparent to Jiang.⁶⁹ These perceptions, which regrettably I cannot verify, are interesting not because they confirm the importance of central patronage in regional appointments, but because they do not follow any obvious lines of factional allegiance in the traditional sense - that is, as with Hu Yaobang's support for Raidi, there is no apparent shared ideological view within these relationships. Hu Jintao's views are uncertain, but he is not usually thought of as a hard-line conservative, which Chen certainly is; Jiang chaired and presumably supported the Third National Forum on Work in Tibet, which produced basic policy lines counter to those favoured by the moderate Tibetans whom he apparently supports. It may be that in these varied affiliations among Beijing leaders one could trace the remnants of the North-

west/South-west or Wang Zhen/Deng Xiaoping divides, but it anyway suggests that at least in terms of Tibet policy the top leaders in China are not divided by ideas: if there are factional differences driving their decisions and conflicts, these are apparently concept blind.

Conclusion

We cannot with such inconclusive evidence say definitively if there are factions within the Tibetan leadership, let alone in Beijing, or if there are or are not definite views that can be associated with one or other group; in any case, these categories and their membership may shift frequently and they may represent themselves differently for tactical reasons at one or other point in time. But we can with some confidence describe territorial groupings among the Tibetans in the TAR élite, and we can roughly discern how those groupings rise and fall over time.

The “*Ba-Hor*” epigram appears to be a condensation of such an account. It seems also to contain an “embedded” or historically layered description of different processes by which leadership is formed, contrasting those Tibetan leaders who are seen as inheritors of some epic endeavour in an historic moment with those whose entry into the regional élite is viewed as a result of connections, apparently irrespective of their histories or beliefs. It appears to function as a way of describing the new élite, its perceived amorality, its lack of historical grandeur, its technocratic character and its intellectual impoverishment in a post-ideological phase where factions are defined by allegiance to themselves and not by any location in history or by discernible ideas. As we have seen, it has spawned a more recent phrase which seems to suggest that these “modern” leaders are concept-free placemen deployed by more powerful agencies, so that it does not much matter whether *Horpas* or *Tsangpas* are dominant. The phrase can be seen as an elegaic comment on the recurrent diminution of the elder generation of *Baba* leaders, a rebuttal of the Party's claim that involvement in earlier generations of revolutionary idealism is rewarded by promotion, and a rejection of any presumption that “modern” political leaders are appointed out of concern for “Tibetan” interests. But the epigram offers more than the political satire or nostalgia depicted in its pre-1959 counterparts: it indicates interpretations of the functioning of client leadership groupings in Tibet, and of their significance in predicting political change, thus reminding us of the potential wealth of understanding that can be found in popular perceptions of politics.

Notes

¹ See Goldstein, “Lhasa Street Songs”, 1982, pp.56-67.

² Goldstein (1982), p.57, described the street songs as “to a large extent, actually the product of the political intelligentsia ... they were a means by which the leading contenders for power and influence could publically [*sic*] expose the embarrassing misdeeds of political enemies”. Goldstein reads them as incident-specific, unlike the phrase examined here, which was probably produced by the people who use it rather than planted among them by the élite, and which as we will see is being continuously elaborated by its users.

³ See Dreyer, “Traditional Minorities Élites” in Scalapino (1972), pp.416-450. Israel Epstein (1983), pp.156 ff., describes Tibetan leaders according to the standard generational conventions of Party historiography. Unlike June Dreyer, he found no Tibetan leaders involved in the Party before the Long March and so numbers his generations from that date onwards; thus his first and second generations correspond to the second and third generations described by Dreyer.

⁴ See Table 1 for a sample of current Tibetan leaders whom I have organised according to a generational model.

⁵ See Sperling (1976) and Takla (1969) for accounts of the Long March and Tibetan involvement.

⁶ Phuntsog Wangyal actually joined the Party in 1939, but this is contested by official sources, either on the grounds that his admission was not formalised or because he was expelled for a period in the 1940s.

⁷ In mid-1998 Lobsang Tenzin was replaced as head of the United Front by another *Tsangpa*, Samdrup, former head of the Shigatse Party (see note 49). The position of vice-director was given to Atar, who is from Nagchu.

⁸ In my original presentation of this paper I suggested a way of applying the generational model to early Tibetan leaders, as well as a detailed form of statistical analysis to identify cadre groupings, and discussed briefly models based on career path analysis and on class background; but for the sake of brevity I have not included that material in this version of that paper.

⁹ Richardson, 1962, pp.1-3, citing Sir Charles Bell as his source. Richardson’s definition of ethnographic Tibet is narrower than present claims by exiles and than the 13 autonomous areas acknowledged by the PRC.

¹⁰ This area corresponds more or less with what the Chinese authorities have called since the 1950s the 13 Tibetan autonomous areas - that is, the Tibet Autonomous Region, the ten autonomous prefectures in Qinghai, Gansu, Sichuan and Yunnan, and the two autonomous counties in Gansu and Sichuan. In Chinese and in contemporary official Tibetan these are referred to as “the Five Provinces and Region” (*wu sheng qu*, or more fully in Tibetan, *zhing-chen dang rang-skyong-ljongs lnga*), that is, the Four Provinces with Tibetan areas plus the TAR. The two Tibetan autonomous counties, both of which are defined as outside Tibetan autonomous prefectures, are Pari (Chinese: Tianzhu) in Wuwei Prefecture, Gansu, and Mili (Chinese: Muli) in Liangshan Yi Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan. The area of traditional Tibet which was mostly under the direct administration of Lhasa, sometimes referred by foreigners as Outer Tibet (*houzang* or “rear Tibet” in Chinese) or more commonly these days as Central Tibet (although in fact it includes western Tibet), is now called the Tibet Autonomous Region or the TAR, a practice which I have also followed except when speaking of the period before the founding of the TAR in 1965, when I have used the term Central Tibet.

¹¹ Approximately 53% of Tibetans live outside the TAR, according to the 1990 census.

¹² The discrepancies with the rule of thumb Qinghai-Amdo, Sichuan-Kham are Ngaba prefecture in Sichuan, which is seen as part of Amdo, and Yushu prefecture in Qinghai, which is seen as part of Kham. The Tibetan autonomous areas in Gansu are part of Amdo and those in Yunnan part of Kham.

¹³ Treating the Tibetan area as an entirety has been used as part of a politicised discourse by many writers (a practice strongly challenged in Goldstein (1994), pp.76-90), but this is an approach which is increasingly current among a number of Chinese scholars as well, particularly in the field of natural sciences, presumably because it reflects cultural, geological and geographic realities. Chinese writers in these fields usually refer to

the larger area as the Qinghai-Tibetan (or *Qingzang*) Plateau. Chinese economists and developmentalists have also begun to write in these terms. See, for example, *Qingzang Gaoyuan Chanye Buju* ("The Disposition of Industries in the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau"), Zhang Kejun, Beijing: China Tibetology Publishing House, 1997, part of the series *Environment and Development of the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau*. Lhasa is still a major centre of pilgrimage and trade for Tibetans throughout Tibet, as well as a cultural epicentre, and there is a significant flow of Tibetan migrants throughout the Tibetan area which overrides current administrative divisions.

¹⁴ The political implications surrounding the adaptation of the term *Han* to describe the ethnic Chinese have been explored by Elliot Sperling, Oslo University Lecture, Oslo, August 1992. For studies of nationalising terminology in China, in particular "minzu" discourse, see, for example, Bulag, Khan, Sautman and Dikkoter.

¹⁵ The terms "leaders" and "élite" in this paper are understood in the sense in which they are used without comment by the internal Chinese sources I have consulted - that is, they refer primarily to the *gaogan* ("high cadres") or senior leaders, defined as those who hold positions at prefectural level or above. Chinese publications and statistics on leaders intended for public distribution usually include village level and county level officials in any description of leaders (see, for example, *100 Questions about Tibet*, ed. Jing Wei, Beijing: Beijing Review Press, 1989), but the internal publications I have consulted write of the leadership as if it consisted only of the higher levels above the *xian* or *rdzong* level, a practice which I have followed in this paper and which I think conforms more closely to general conceptions of a political élite. I have attempted a relatively detailed listing and assessment of county-level leaders in my book *Leaders in Tibet - A Directory*. The rigid hierarchical distinctions between provincial, prefectural and county levels in this pyramidal leadership structure apply not only to officials in the government but also within offices, enterprises, NGOs, the Military, the Party and many other areas of Chinese and Tibetan society.

¹⁶ The mass organisations are primarily the trade unions, the Women's Federation and the Communist Youth League.

¹⁷ The informants whom I consulted were largely from a distinctive educated and usually urban class of Lhasa residents, so this survey does not attempt to be comprehensive. Some, but not all, of my informants had personal connections to the *Baba* group of leaders and so were pre-disposed towards that group, but this phrase is widely used by Tibetans with quite different affiliations, including Tibetans in Kham and Amdo. I would like to record my gratitude to those Tibetans and others who provided extensive advice and assistance for this research, who sadly cannot be named.

¹⁸ There is a wealth of documentary material, such as the series of county and prefectural histories produced by the CPPCC in recent years, but in this preliminary study I have not been able to turn to those resources.

¹⁹ Hu Yaobang's exact words in his May 1980 speech in Lhasa were: "The result of what we discussed yesterday is that within two to three years, my view being that within two years is best, that Tibetan cadres must comprise more than two thirds of the State cadres not engaged in production, including teachers. I am not speaking of cadres engaged in production. They should all be Tibetan. We have been in this place for thirty years and we have completed our historical task!" Text published in Chinese by *Zhongguo Shidai*, United States, April 1998, translated into English in "The Chinese leader who apologised to Tibet: Hu Yaobang's 1980 Speech", *TIN News Update*, 12 April 1999.

²⁰ Unlike Chinese four character phrases, there does not seem to be a particular tradition of four syllable phrases in Tibetan proverbs and Penba (1996) does not indicate any preference for that form.

²¹ It has been pointed out to me that the correct name of the main town is *Ba*. Bathang was a adjacent area where the Catholic mission station was sited. As my informant commented, "Since the missionaries make the maps, Ba is [now] known as Bathang."

²² Chandra Das (*A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Motilal Banarsidas, 1991 (1902)) gives Tartar as the translation; Goldstein translates it as "Mongolians, Turks, Uighurs, northern nomads" (*Tibetan-English Dictionary of Modern Tibetan*, Kathmandu: Bibliotheca Himalayica, 1975). I am indebted to Dr. Gelek for pointing out the range of meanings for the term *Hor* in different areas.

²³ More precisely, the term *Horpa* refers to the *Horpa tsho so dgu*, the 39 States of Hor, an area which comprised an important clan area until 1959, and which included Briu, Brachen, and Amdo counties in the central-eastern areas of what is now defined as Nagchu Prefecture, as well as parts of south-western Qinghai. See *Nag chu* (1992) pp.1-59 and note 61 below.

²⁴ The practice of naming leaders by their birthplace is current in normal discourse concerning leaders. See, for example, TIN (Tibet Information Network) Doc. 18(VL), an anonymous handwritten note from Lhasa dated 20th November 1996: "On 16th June 1996, a large meeting was held at Sera monastery, chaired by *Hor* Tenzin, Deputy Secretary of the TAR Communist Party. Among the seventy leaders present at the meeting were Vice-Chairman *Tsangpa* Lhagpa Phuntsog, Director Choegyial from Lhokha, *Tsangpa* Lobsang Tenzin ... and others above the rank of county leader". Stein (1972), p.107, also notes the modern practice in personal names of replacing earlier clan names with the name of the birthplace or territory.

²⁵ The importance of territoriality within Tibetan notions of identity and leadership is now widely discussed, and it was already implicit within the literature on the role of clans and territory, and on ancient military divisions, in early Tibetan history, and within the notion of sacred territory and the *yul lha* practices. See for example, Stein's remark about the placing of royal tombs "at the spot to which the origin of their line was traced" (Stein (1972), p.202) and his general comment "*c'est que dans la religion indigène des Tibétains, chaque groupe humain homogène a conscience de se rélier, dans l'espace, au site qu'il habite et, dans le temps, aux ancêtres dont il descend, et de communiquer avec eux. Car l'ancêtre est inséparable de la montagne sacrée qui domine, comme lieu-saint, le pays habité et communique avec le Ciel...*" (Stein, 1959, p.85). See also the discussion of "galactic polity" and the decentralized character of the state in Samuel (1995), pp.61-63. Another current Lhasa saying, closer in form to those studied by Goldstein, indicates this territorial perspective, and confirms the view of *Horpas*, referred to here as "nomads", as leaders: "*Gtsang pas yon tan sbyangs / dpon po 'brog pas byed / skyid po Lha sa bas byed / tshong pa Khams pas byed*" - The *Tsangpas* are skilled at study, the nomads are the bosses, the Lhasa people pursue pleasure, and the *Khampas* carry out trade. The reference to *Khampa* trading corresponds with reports of a general expansion of traditional territorially-based networks among Tibetans for ritual, business, travel and political functions throughout Tibetan areas today (for example, the predominance of Amdo traders in Dram on the Nepalese border).

²⁶ See Table 2. Note that unofficial reports would include Yangling Dorje as a *Baba* (see note 52).

²⁷ See Stoddard (1985), pp.92-94, 106-108, and Takla (1969) for accounts of the early *Babas*.

²⁸ This is one source of the "deception" view of the generational model among some party cadres I spoke with, who argue that the positions held by Tibetan Long Marchers such as Tian Bao, Hu Zhonglin and Yang Dongsheng were either secondary or titular. In the longer version of this paper I have discussed the important role played in shaping views of the leadership by discontented retirées (part of the "*lao xizangren*" grouping) from the Party or military, including most notably the June 1995 bombing of the Highway Monument in Lhasa.

²⁹ One *Baba* informant said of Gyaltsen Norbu: "He is not known for anything for good or for bad. Not many people even know that he is a *Baba*. Their policy was to appoint unknown people of little education and with no political background to high position. Gyaltsen Norbu was one of the first who met those qualifications in this category".

³⁰ Gyaltsen Norbu began his career when the PLA arrived in Bathang in 1950, and after working as a translator for the troops for two years was made chief of police in Chamdo in 1953; it may have been a largely nominal position, since he was 21 at the time.

³¹ Gyaltsen Norbu was first listed in this position on 13th December 1994 in a Lhasa TV report discussing the Third Forum, according to the *Summary of World Broadcasts* (SWB) on 17th December 1994.

³² Wang Xiaoqiang (1994), p.291, refers to this attempt to recreate the 1950s dispensation in 1980s Tibet, and goes on to argue that an even more reformist approach would be necessary. Wang was an advisor to Zhao Ziyang on Tibet policy in the early 1980s. Smith (1994), p.72, also argues that the 1980s period was an effort to return to 1950s policy. Note also that Hu's promise to reduce the number of Chinese cadres in Tibet was a

repeat of the 1957 undertaking: “Because the reform will not be carried out within the next six years, all preparation work for the reform will be stopped and the over-whelming majority of the Han cadres will be transferred away from Tibet to participate in socialist construction in other parts of the motherland” (“Support the Central Government Policy of “No Reform in Six Years””, *Xizang Ribao*, Lhasa, 10th August, 1957). See also note 37 below.

³³ Goldstein, for example, alludes to this widely-held view in *The Snow-lion and the Dragon* (1997).

³⁴ See Norbu (1998), pp.328-329 and Wangyal (1994), pp.200-201.

³⁵ By the time of the Second National Forum on Work in Tibet in 1984 Hu Yaobang was already facing internal criticism from China for his 1980 promise to withdraw most Chinese cadres from Tibet. “At least 15,000” were withdrawn, according to *Unification of Answers to Foreigners' Questions about Tibet* (internal document in Chinese, probably 1986, (TIN Doc. 26(TT)). Huang (1995), in his valuable discussion of this question, gives a net figure of 14,464 from 1980-83, about 24% of the total 1980 TAR cadre force. On Hu, see Yang Zhongmei.

³⁶ Some reports say that *Baba* Tashi Tsering, rather than Phuntsog Wangyal, was proposed for this position.

³⁷ Hu intentionally arrived in Lhasa to announce his six point offer to the Tibetans in 1980 on the same day that the 17 Point Agreement had been signed 29 years earlier. See Wang Yao (1994). Wang was Hu's translator on the Lhasa visit, making this article an historical text of some importance.

³⁸ The Third Forum specifically called for a reverse of the 1980 policy to withdraw Chinese cadres from the TAR: “Meanwhile, we should take effective steps to maintain the current ranks of Han cadres and transfer Han and other minority cadres from the hinterland into Tibet” (“Regional Party Committee transmits Third Tibet Work Forum guidelines...”, *Xizang Ribao*, Lhasa, 2nd August 1994, published in translation in *SWB*, BBC, 21st August 1994). For a more detailed discussion of the Third Forum and some of the texts produced by the Forum see Barnett (1996), Part 1 and Appendices.

³⁹ I have considered a faction to be an informal group within the élite with distinct commonalities and potential access to the power apparatus.

⁴⁰ Dorje Tseten, doyen of the Amdo cohort among the early 1950s Tibetan cadres, is now head of the China Tibetology Institute in Beijing, a *buzhang* or ministerial-level appointment. Remarkably, however, he is linked by marriage as well as generation to the *Baba* group, since his wife is the daughter of Kelsang Tsering, the former head or *tusi* [maybe not a *Tusi*] of Bathang and a member of the KMT parliament. The marriage seems to have been a cross-factional alliance. In my original presentation I discussed also the features of the Amdo contingent, and of the important “*lao xizangren*” faction of Chinese officials of which they were, I think, a part.

⁴¹ I am aware of suggestions that this conflict was to some extent involved in events surrounding the Tiananmen Massacre and the fall of Zhao Ziyang in 1989, but I have no published references to this view.

⁴² Peng Dehuai directed by Centre had appointed Fan Ming as General Secretary of the North-west Tibet Working Committee in September or October 1950; it is unclear why it took Fan eight months formally to establish the committee. See *Zuzhishi ziliao*, p.14.

⁴³ I have not been able to establish the exact separation of powers in western Tibet between those that can be dealt with by Lhasa, and those that have to be referred to Urumqi and finally to Lanzhou. Obviously all military affairs in the western areas come under Xinjiang, and it is also clear that border issues belong to this category; I have documented an example of this in “Text of the “21 Point Circular” on Border Regulations” (issued 5th September 1992) in *Reports from Tibet, April-June 1994*, TIN News Review, London: TIN, 6th July 1994. I believe that the Ngari Military district may have included Shigatse and Nagchu at certain times, but as far as I can tell civilian affairs in these two areas were administered by Lhasa since the 1950s, unlike Ngari. The Southern Xinjiang military district was formed out of the Lanzhou Military Region in October 1987 and administers the Ngari Military District (*Zuzhishi ziliao*, p.276).

⁴⁴ Smith writes that “these two PLA commands were later to form the basis of a factional rivalry among the military, and later the civilian, administrators of Tibet. The Xinjiang faction also retained direct

administration of western Tibet under the authority of the North-west Military Command" (Smith (1994), p.63; see also Smith (1996), p.366). The *Zuzhishi ziliao* notes that the Party Central Committee on 6th March 1979 ordered that administrative responsibility for the Ngari (Chinese: Ali) Party should be transferred from Xinjiang to the Tibet Party Committee in Lhasa from the beginning of 1980 (*Zuzhishi ziliao*, p.246).

⁴⁵ In the early period after the invasion, and still today, there was a major export of borax from lakes in western Tibet exported via Qinghai; reportedly the Soviet debt was repaid in the 1960s with borax from Tibet. The 1,970-km road from Xining to Lhasa via Nagchu "handles 85 percent of the total transport in and out of Tibet", according to *Qinghai- Tibet highway near completion*, Xinhua, 23rd December 1995.

⁴⁶ In terms of ideology and personal preference the Panchen Lama seems to have found himself more at home with members of the South-West factional affiliation. His connection and sympathy with this group anyway became very clear after his release from prison in 1977, when he met Phuntsog Wangyal in Beijing.

⁴⁷ Some of the Panchen Lama's officials in 1950 reportedly believed that under the PRC "they would independently rule a territorial domain that included all of Tsang" (Smith (1996), p.365, citing Jigme Ngapo).

⁴⁸ See "Continuity and Contradiction in TAR Institutions", in Conner and Barnett, *Leaders in Tibet*, Part II, p.155-16. After 1959 the Chinese maintained the practice of giving notional authority to traditional and often mutually antagonistic rulership structures by placing them within the Party, Government, CPPCC or the People's Congress. See note 61 below for an example of this in the case of the *Horpa* states.

⁴⁹ Sengchen Lobsang Gyaltsen was made nominal head of Tashilhunpo Monastery on July 1995, replacing the imprisoned Chadrel Rinpoche in the wake of the dispute over the selection of the new Panchen Lama (see "Panchen Lama Dispute: New Leaders Installed at Tashilhunpo", *TIN News Update*, London, 14th September, 1995); this repeated Sengchen's promotion when the Panchen Lama fell from power in the 1960s. Seven months after his 1995 promotion there was an unsuccessful assassination attempt at Sengchen's house in Lhasa (see "Tibetan Newspaper Sabotage; Lama's House Bombed", *TIN News Update*, London, 28th January, 1996). Samdrup became Secretary of the Shigatse Prefectural Party Committee in 1980 and was promoted to the TAR Party Committee in early 1996.

⁵⁰ Another, more elegant, saying is *Hor gnam Gtsang sa* – "the *Horpas* are the sky, and the *Tsangpas* are the earth." This has been explained to me as meaning that the two groups complement each other within the élite.

⁵¹ Israel Epstein, describing a meeting with Lobsang Tsultrim (he spells the name as Losang Tsechen; in pinyin it occurs more commonly as Luosang Cicheng) stresses his serf origins in Bathang, his lack of formal education, his competence in agricultural matters and his charisma. "In passing he would mention how sheep from Tibet, Xinjiang and other parts of China compared in wool and meat yields with those from New Zealand. An engaging and impressive man," he writes. He says Lobsang Tsultrim was offered the chance by the 18th Army to work either in the inland areas or in Tibet, and chose Tibet. Epstein, p.159.

⁵² Yangling Dorje, at one point deputy Governor of Sichuan Province, achieved higher rank than Lobsang Tsultrim, and is included in the *Baba* contingent by its own members, although he is listed officially as coming from Drayab in western Kham. According to one informant, this was his mother's birthplace (she was a *Yi*) and he came in fact from Bathang, but mis-attributed his birthplace in official accounts in order not to be associated with the *Baba* group, at that time seen as too dominant within the élite. He joined the Party in 1949, and was deputy secretary of the Communist Youth League in Sichuan from 1956-66; after the Cultural Revolution he was 1st Party Secretary in Derge (1973-74) and in Ngaba prefecture (1975-79). From 1980 -85 he was a general secretary (equivalent to a deputy secretary) of the TAR Party Committee.

⁵³ Correspondence from a Tibetan informant who was close to the group.

⁵⁴ This is not the Tashi Tsering in Lhasa, co-author of the autobiography *The Struggle for Modern Tibet*.

⁵⁵ Lobsang Thrinley, until 1998 deputy head of the PRC Nationalities and Religious Affairs Commission, now a Deputy Director at the "Trulku School" set up by the Panchen Lama in Beijing, is also from Bathang.

⁵⁶ There is also a *Baba* Kelsang Gyurme who is known as "the petrol king", apparently because he owns or operates the franchise for shipping petrol into Lhasa, but I assume this is not the famous scholar of the same

name. Some informants pointed out to me also the role of *Babas* in the *Chu bzhi sgang drug*, the guerilla movement active until 1974, for much of the time under *Baba Yeshe*.

⁵⁷ This view is not merely mythological, since the *Babas* were first dominant during the 1950s pre-Uprising period when policy towards Central Tibet was based on notions of conciliation and inclusiveness. This was a consequence of national as much as local policy, but Phuntsog Wangyal may have been involved in drawing up the 8 Principles (listed in Shakya (1999), Chapter 2) which were the basis of the 1951 Agreement.

⁵⁸ Shakya (1999), Chapter 9, describes the urgent effort to recruit Tibetan cadres and party members from the peasantry and the rural areas after the 1959 Uprising; this was the period during which Raidi was recruited.

⁵⁹ For example, Xinhua, 17th March 1994, described Raidi as "a serf who became a senior leading cadre".

⁶⁰ Less prominent members of the Nagchu leadership contingent currently include Namgyal, from Nagchu county, head of the Agricultural Bank in Lhasa, and Atar, from Biru, vice-director of the TAR United Front.

⁶¹ Yungdrung Gawa's father was the last *Hor kyi gyalpo*, the king or leader of the 39 states of Hor. An account of the 39 States, of their history of opposition to Lhasa, and of the promotion of Yungdrung Gawa and his father in 1959, can be found in *Nag chu* (1992). The text notes that the *Horpa* states were from time to time in conflict with Lhasa, and that fugitives from Lhasa often settled in the Qinghai areas of the *Horpa* states. Thus people from these areas were probably seen as more friendly to the Chinese, and this is sometimes cited to explain the promotion of the *Horpas* by the Chinese authorities.

⁶² One informant, himself a *Baba*, said of Tenzin: "He is an educated soul comparable to *Babas*".

⁶³ The winding down of those classes indicated the abandonment of the plan to implement beyond the primary level the 1987 law (passed in 1988 as the "Regulations on the Study, Use and Development of the Tibetan Language") championed by the Panchen Lama which had set target dates for Tibetan to become the medium of education at all levels. See "Student Unease at Language Policies in Schools, University", *TIN News Update*, London, 31st December, 1996.

⁶⁴ Chen's speech was published in Chinese in *Xizang Ribao*, Lhasa, on 16th July 1997 and published in translation as "Tibet party secretary criticizes "erroneous views" of literature, art" in *SWB FE/D2989/CNS 050897* (5th August, 1997). It included the infamous passage: "Some others say that college teaching material will be void of substance if religion is not included and that in that case, colleges would not be real colleges. [...] Is only Buddhism Tibetan culture? It is utterly absurd. Buddhism is a foreign culture. [...] Some people, claiming to be authorities, have made such shameless statements confusing truth and falsehood. Comrades who are engaged in research on Tibetan culture should be indignant at such statements."

⁶⁵ "Reshuffle in Tibet government: committee members expelled", *TIN News Update*, London, 4 June 1998.

⁶⁶ This process of shift from territorial affiliation to a career path or patronage affiliation can be seen in the case of Jamyang (Chinese: Jiayang or Shengyan), since 1997 a vice-chair of the CPPCC. He was originally a *Baba* but in 1964 was made Prefectural Commissioner in Nagchu, a position which placed him close to Raidi and which contributed to the subsequent promotion of Raidi and other *Horpa* officials. Lobsang Tenzin (Chinese: Luosang Danzhen), head of the TAR United Front from 1994 until 1998 and a Party Committee member from 1996) was a *Tsangpa* who served much of his career in Nagchu, where he was Party Secretary from 1979 throughout the 1980s, and so may also have benefited from a similar affiliation shift.

⁶⁷ Hu reportedly went on to say that there would be a Tibetan in the post of TAR Party Secretary by the year 2000. He also defended Raidi as loyal to the Party; see Shakya (1999), chapter 14. I am indebted to Tsering Shakya for information about this episode. *Nag chu* (1992) anyway suggests that *Horpas* were seen by the Party as more reliable (see note 61).

⁶⁸ Raidi may have enjoyed local patronage as well, besides the support he received from Jamyang (see note 66 above): Tseten (Caidan), one of the respected early Eastern Tibetan activists who joined the Party in 1954. Now a senior leader in Qinghai, he was 1st secretary of Drachen County Party Committee in Nagchu from 1965 to 1972, throughout the Cultural Revolution, and Party Secretary of Nagchu from 1972 to 1979, the exact period of Raidi's rise to the regional level. He must have known Raidi, and may in fact have sponsored

his promotion. It may be significant that Tseten was head of the TAR Organisation Bureau from 1980 and so was in charge of appointments at that time.

⁶⁹ Some accounts say that Chen's patron in Beijing is Li Ruihuan, which would also contradict standard "hard-soft" readings of the Chinese élite, since Li presents himself as a moderate on the Tibet question.

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