



SJEAA
GREATER CHINA

FORBIDDEN IMAGE

The 1996 Chinese Ban of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama's Image

More than a decade has passed since the Chinese government banned the possession of images of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama within the Tibetan Autonomous Region. Images of the Dalai Lama, who currently lives in exile as the spiritual and political leader of the Tibetans, became highly accessible in the 1990s and held special meaning for Tibetans living under Communist domination. Faced with the growing stature of the Dalai Lama in the international community, including his 1989 Nobel Peace Prize, the People's Republic of China imposed a ban in 1996 on the possession of the exiled leader's image. This article details the political and social events that led to the ban, attempts to understand the Tibetan response, and evaluates the effectiveness of censorship as a method of achieving the objectives of the Chinese government.

Sarah Getzelman

Ohio State University

"Buddhism must conform to socialism, not socialism to Buddhism."¹

The visual image has long been recognized as a source of powerful human communication. Whether as a display of religiosity, cultural unity, or personal spirituality, images signal distinct and important messages to a community. In a relatively illiterate society they become all the more powerful.² The image of the Dalai Lama has long been revered in Tibet. As a reincarnation of Avalokitesvara, the Dalai Lama acts as a living buddha, and his image is of great importance to practitioners. The role of the Dalai Lama, however, has changed drastically in the past century. The current and fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, has gone beyond sectarian issues to unite the exiled community of Tibet.³ It is this political role that has troubled the Chinese government, and prompted officials to prohibit the

possession of the Dalai Lama's image in 1996.

Initially, this display of political power seemed to come at an arbitrary date in Sino-Tibetan relations. The accession of Tibet (now known as the Tibetan Autonomous Region or TAR) into the People's Republic of China (PRC) was completed in 1959.⁴ After the death of Mao Zedong in 1976 and the subsequent end of the Cultural Revolution, rebel uprisings within China's borders, including those in Lhasa and Tiananmen Square, brought international attention to human rights issues in China. Thus, the question one might ask is why Chinese officials waited until 1996 to impose a policy banning images of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.

The events leading up to the ban provide a clear context for the PRC's iconoclastic agenda.

After 35 years of political control, the Chinese authorities had become concerned by the rising popularity of the Dalai Lama in the West. The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989, which drew attention to the Tibetan cause and garnered sympathy and a new consciousness from the international community. Within the span of a few years, the Chinese government no longer viewed photographs of the Dalai Lama as personal mementos; rather, these images were seen as displays of solidarity amongst the 'separatist' Tibetan faction. Tenzin Gyatso's image became an entity distinct from any other Dalai Lama image. By owning a photograph of the Dalai Lama, a Tibetan might not only be professing his faith, but also objecting to the Chinese regime.⁵

As a result, the Chinese government perceived a need to repress such displays of solidarity and dissension. The timing of the ban suggests a connection between the continuation of the 1987 Anti-Splittist movement and the second wave of China's Strike Hard campaign in 1996, detailed in this paper.⁶ Though the latter decree is generally seen as a reaction to non-political crimes, specifically in China proper, the 'zero-tolerance' effect of the campaign has affected Tibetan political violators of the former edict as well. This paper seeks to provide a historical context for the eventual ban by examining the political and social events that led up to it and to evaluate the effectiveness of such censorship in meeting the Chinese objective.

Post-Mao Developments

Political and social reformations in Tibet finally became possible after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976.⁷ Chinese Communist Party

(CCP) leader Deng Xiaoping and other reformers under the newly reorganized government repressed propaganda measures against the Dalai Lama in place since 1959. In 1978, discussions between Beijing and the Tibetan Government in Exile led to the release of many political prisoners held captive since the Chinese invasion in 1959. An agreement was also reached by the Chinese government in 1979 allowing a delegation of the Dalai Lama along with his brother Lobsang Samten to visit Tibet and report to Dharamsala according to conditions outlined by the ruling Communist government. The Tibetan response to this delegation, however, may have unintentionally caused more paranoia in the minds of CCP leaders. Tibetans throughout the TAR greeted the delegation with cheers for the Dalai Lama's long life and shouts proclaiming Tibet's independence. A total of three delegations visited Tibet; the second was expelled and a fourth tour was planned but never executed.⁸ The Chinese authorities, perplexed by the continuing support for the Dalai Lama after 20 years of Communist rule, decided to pay a visit to the TAR.

CCP general secretary Hu Yaobang organized a fact-finding mission to the region in 1980. Hu's shock at the complete lack of infrastructure and economic devastation within Tibet led to a six-point reform policy.⁹ Though the policy was in line with general Party rules, certain measures were taken to ensure success with the distinct situation in Tibet. The result of this 1980 visit and revision of rules imposed during the Cultural Revolution was a newfound sense of cultural identity in Tibet. The early 1980s marked a period of economic growth and acceptance of certain religious practices by the CCP. Though not all religious freedoms were

granted, individual practice was allowed and even encouraged as a unique characteristic that could eventually be marketed by the Chinese to tourists. This period also marked the reopening of several monasteries, though again, the rules governing the monasteries changed from the pre-Chinese society. The number of monks allowed at each monastery was drastically reduced, the content allowed within the teachings was monitored, and most noticeably, a clear division between secular and religious rights was enforced.¹⁰ Even with the new rules, many Tibetans gladly reclaimed their religious identities and openly arranged altars in their homes as well.

In 1985, Wu Jinghua, another reformer committed to a more open Tibet, became the secretary of the regional Communist Party in Tibet. Wu's careful consideration of Tibetan culture and his ability to secure foreign aid attracted much attention to Tibet, and the region was officially opened for tourism. Wu's liberal policies, though, would eventually be interpreted as a threat by the conservative element within the Party. Both Hu Yaobang and Wu Jinghua were ousted from the Party in 1987 and 1988, respectively. The progressive nature of the Party in Tibet again succumbed to uncertainty as Hu Jintao was named the successor to Wu. Hu Jintao's political crackdown in Tibet exacerbated an already unstable social structure.

Additionally, the opening of Tibet to tourists in the early 1980s provided the Tibetan people with a network of information. The Chinese government has cited this influx of outside ideas as fundamental to the uprisings that would follow. However, in his comprehensive evaluation of political protests in Tibet, Ronald Schwartz finds no evidence to support such claims that any uprising was rooted in

either foreign reactionary ideas or directions from the Tibetan Government in Exile.¹¹ In order to tighten its control on the flow of information, the CCP confiscated any information determined to be reactionary or 'splittist.' This included documents like the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.¹²

Tibetan Uprisings

Between 1987 and 1992, 138 separate uprisings or incidents were reported.¹³ The first began as a show of support for the work of the Dalai Lama when he presented the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus with a Five-Point Peace Plan in 1987.¹⁴ While the Dalai Lama was in the United States, the Chinese authorities executed two Tibetans accused of criminal activity. On September 27, 1987, the streets of Lhasa filled with political protesters for the first time since 1959. The Beijing Review linked the uprising to the influence of the West: "[the riot was] designed in faraway quarters as an echo to the Dalai Lama's separationist activities during his visits to the United States and Europe....[US support of these activities is] a gross violation of the norms of international relations and an act of interference in China's internal affairs."¹⁵

Several days later the Tibet Daily published a government notice announcing the new Anti-Splittist Campaign that remains in effect to this day. Three directives were clearly defined to notify the public that neither support for the Tibetan Government in Exile nor any opposition to the Party would be tolerated. The goal of this directive was to identify the 'troublemakers' of the group and prevent future uprisings at the Jokhang in the heart of Lhasa.¹⁶ Three phases of the campaign followed,

with the final phase imposing martial law in Lhasa. The resulting ramifications were broad. Tibetans who had family members in India, specifically children in school there, were seen as political risks despite the fact that their ties to anyone in Dharamsala may have been quite tenuous. These otherwise innocent Tibetans had their rations for food and other subsidized goods cut off completely and their children were removed from registration lists that would have otherwise allowed them employment or education upon return to Tibet.¹⁷

In 1988, the Dalai Lama presented a proposal to the government in Beijing to end Tibet's quest for a return to independence. This proposal allowed China to sustain control of foreign and militaristic matters, while giving true autonomy to the TAR. Unfortunately, the Strasbourg Proposal, as it was called, was unfavorable with both factions. Many Tibetans in the exile community thought the agreement was too weak, and those on the Chinese side opposed giving Tibet independence due to the national unity established under Mao. In response to his critics, the Dalai Lama explained that his main goals had changed because of the severity of the issue. Instead, he now requested a reversal of the Han population transfer policy, and more importantly, a cessation of the killings occurring during the series of uprisings.¹⁸ In December of that year, two days after another uprising, the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) announced that "what had happened on 10 December had happened before and it might happen again. In every case it will be dealt with the same way, the demonstrators will be shot. This is the policy of the central committee in Beijing."¹⁹

By 1990, a new wave of religious intolerance

had begun. Ten years after Hu Yaobang's significant visit to Tibet, the Chinese authorities ordered four tanks to the square in front of the Jokhang. The symbolism of this move was clear--the streets of Lhasa had been free of such restrictions since the end of the Cultural Revolution.²⁰ Due to the severe restrictions on foreigners, there were just eleven visitors present during this time of martial law.²¹ The Jokhang continued to serve as the heart of the political and religious fight between the Tibetans and the People's Armed Police, a division of the People's Liberation Army.²² Just one year earlier, members of the Chinese military had stationed themselves in front of the temple, aiming rocket launchers toward the building.²³

Though personal devotion had previously not been viewed as a threat, the Chinese authorities now relegated independent Buddhist acts to a manifestation of a solidarity faction. The government began to realize the problems with restricting political independence, yet at the same time allowing for other independent freedoms, namely Buddhist religious practices. Two of the more ubiquitous practices to be banned included the burning of juniper incense and the throwing of tsampa or barley flour. One of the more physical displays of support for the Dalai Lama included these practices in 1989, six days after the Tibetan leader received the Nobel Peace Prize. By circling the Jokhang and repeatedly throwing tsampa, the Tibetans were—to the ignorance of the Chinese guards on duty—showing support for the international award winner. One Tibetan described the gathering: "We threw tsampa at each other and at the soldiers and the police for hours before they realized why we were doing it...then

the PLA went searching for Tibetans with bags of tsampa and flour-covered fingers.”²⁴ Those arrested for throwing tsampa were subject to three years in prison.

The Dalai Lama continued to focus his efforts towards US policymakers in Washington. President George Bush signed a bill with amendments promoting Tibetan language radio broadcasts and reserving one million dollars for Tibetan refugee scholarships.²⁵ In 1990, Congress declared May 13th the National Day in Support for Freedom and Human Rights in China and Tibet. Martial law was lifted from Tibet a few months later and tourists returned to Lhasa. George Bush’s opposition to Chinese policy and reforms manifested a new strategic support for the Dalai Lama and his proposals. For example, in October 1991, Bush signed a State Department Authorization Act including the statement:

*That it is the sense of Congress that Tibet, including those areas incorporated into the Chinese provinces of Sichuan, Yunnan, Gansu, and Qinghai, is an occupied country under established principles of international law whose true representatives are the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile as recognized by the Tibetan people.*²⁶

On the heels of this declaration, the Dalai Lama requested a trip to his homeland to speak with the Tibetan people about the situation there and possible negotiations; Beijing refused.²⁷ By 1995, the Chinese government orchestrated aggressive attacks against the Dalai Lama, which appeared regularly in national newspapers. An article in Zhongguo Xizang condemned the ‘Dalai clique,’²⁸ criticized the ‘guise’ of the human rights movement, and argued that the Tibetan independence movement would be much weaker if the Dalai Lama were no

longer around.²⁹

The Strike Hard Campaign

The 1983 Strike Hard Campaign focused on criminal activity in China proper. It vowed to provide “severe and speedy punishment” to all offenders.³⁰ Soon after, Amnesty International questioned the CCP’s protection of human rights in a system with no fair trials in place. According to these reports, defendants could be tried without warning, without the assistance of legal counsel, and without knowledge of the crime with which they were accused. The campaign also allowed courts at the provincial level to approve death sentences and executions to be carried out immediately.³¹ Though the 1983 campaign did not apparently affect the TAR, the second incarnation of the program would prove to be a catalyst in the breakdown of Sino-Tibetan relations in 1996.

The second Strike Hard Campaign, equally dismissive of fair trials in favor of swift punishment, reappeared thirteen years after the initial program. On April 29, 1996, People’s Daily, the official Party newspaper, called on judicial and public security personnel to “seriously adhere to the principle of severely and quickly punishing criminals.”³² Although this second wave of the campaign was introduced into Tibet for less than four months, its impact, in accordance with the Anti-Splittist campaign, remains.³³ The correlation between the introduction of this zero tolerance policy and the prohibition of the Dalai Lama’s image is clear--Tibetans branded as ‘splittist’ were now targeted by the campaign.³⁴

The second incarnation of Strike Hard undoubtedly came as a result of the Fourth Tibet

Work Forum, yet another Party-led gathering of new reforms aimed at Tibet. Though the first two forums administered liberal policies to the region largely due to the influence of Hu Yaobang, the Third Work Forum criticized these decisions. By the Fourth Work Forum, the language used specifically referred to the Dalai Lama as the prime target of official attacks on splittism. Attention towards the Dalai Lama's activities intensified as an unnamed authority commented on the campaign: "[T]hose who make use of religion to interfere with administrative, judicial, martial, educational, and other social affairs, especially those who take advantage of religious reasons to split the country, must be severely cracked down upon according to law."³⁵

The Dalai Lama became a major focus of Strike Hard as the Anti-Splittist movement added its Patriotic Re-education campaign. The intent of this campaign was to infiltrate the monasteries and nunneries—the sources of previous uprisings—and enforce a rejection of the Dalai Lama. In essence, the Chinese authorities subverted the legal problems with directly enforcing Strike Hard against political dissidents by introducing political reformation at the source of the problem. The oaths mandated by the Chinese Government were:

1. Agree to the historical unity of China and Tibet
2. Recognize the Chinese-appointed Panchen Lama
3. Deny Tibet would ever be independent
4. Denounce the Dalai Lama as a traitor or splittist
5. Declare opposition to separatism.³⁶

The three major monasteries of the Gelug order—Drepung, Ganden, and Sera—received the

majority of the focus from work groups assigned to reeducate all of the monks in Lhasa. The campaign was instituted “for the purpose of educating [monks] to oppose completely any activities aimed at splitting the motherland.”³⁷ Besides using this opportunity to physically remove images of the Dalai Lama from all public and private spaces in the monastery, the work cadres informed the monks that they also had to denounce the Dalai Lama as a ‘splittist.’ This demanded far too much from the monks; several left the monastery to return to their villages or escaped through Nepal. There is at least one account of a monk committing suicide rather than denounce the Dalai Lama. The monks that remained on diplomatic grounds agreed to some of the earlier Party arguments, though they were able to convince work teams that denouncing the Dalai Lama was inconsequential.

Progress made by the Dalai Lama began to lose momentum on the international stage and the Chinese gained an economic stronghold on several key countries. In 1993, the United States threatened sanctions against China unless a list of human rights violations was addressed. However, these rights were never addressed, and, by 1994, the US revoked its previous threats and renewed trade agreements with China.³⁸

The Ban of the Image

Politics and imagery are inextricably linked in the Chinese Communist tradition. The famous 1953 Dong Xiwen painting, *The Founding Ceremony of China*, had to be repainted three times to remove (literally, paint over) the political figures who fell out of favor with the Party. Though the Dalai Lama was never in favor with the Party,

his emerging international support and mere visual presence within the TAR became problematic for government officials. His image would be accordingly removed, though on a much larger scale than the repainted artwork.³⁹

On April 5, 1996, Tibetan newspapers announced the absolute ban on all images of the Dalai Lama.⁴⁰ In a calculated move, officials decided to introduce the ban gradually. A group of enforcement officials visited public buildings in Lhasa on April 24th to further ensure enforcement of the ban. In May, the Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign set its sights on the schools within Tibet. On May 16th, all middle and secondary school children were informed that the possession of Dalai Lama images would no longer be permitted.⁴¹ Official work teams arrived at several monasteries to ensure the ban was followed.

To a lesser degree, the ban had actually begun two years earlier with the enforced restriction of religious materials in TAR governmental offices. The Tibet Policy first changed after the Third Work Forum with the repeated message to officials that the Dalai Lama was a 'serpent's head' which must be 'chopped off' in order to kill the serpent.⁴² The first stage of the anti-image agenda was enacted when all governmental officials within the TAR were completely banned from any displays of religious affiliation. This same time period brought about several new restrictions to be followed by the monasteries; the most severe repercussions were executed against those responsible for an image of the Dalai Lama on the premises.

The methods of relaying this information to the general public differed depending on location. In Shigatse, the second largest city in Tibet, public

announcements were made on loudspeakers informing Tibetans that anyone with photos of the Dalai Lama would be required to surrender them to officials.⁴³ Subsequent reports indicate that officials required several Tibetans to burn these images or trample on them in a manner not unlike practices from the Cultural Revolution. Additionally, the red cord often worn by Tibetan Buddhists (*sungdu*) was also banned, despite the fact that these cords are generally conferred upon practitioners by lamas in Buddhist ceremonies and do not imply a connection to the Dalai Lama. The ban of this additional display of religiosity pushed the Chinese agenda further toward the eventual removal of all religious practices deemed to be simultaneously political in nature.

The following is an excerpt from a Chinese governmental news media report in which the importance of harnessing the influence of the Dalai Lama was detailed:

Tibetan journalists first face the challenge of and struggle against the Dalai clique in media airspace supported by hostile Western forces. In other words, our Tibetan journalists are faced with the living reality of class struggle on an international scale. Since we are fighting the Dalai clique, it is a life-and-death class struggle of infiltration versus anti-infiltration and subversion versus anti-subversion. The main infiltration means used by the Dalai clique is exploitation of media tools, and exploitation of certain Western media for propaganda and attacks against us.⁴⁴

The Chinese government's ban on all Dalai Lama images may have also been a reaction against the influence of foreigners. Prior to 1996, it was not uncommon to see tourists with pictures of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan flag attached to their backpacks. The ban reinforced a break between what was otherwise a unifying visual image. After

the 1987 uprisings, the Party restricted travel for foreigners and posted a notice detailing the proper etiquette required of all visitors. This posting included many abstract rules, such as respecting state sovereignty. It also included a direct ban on photographing disturbances, most likely with the desire to prevent international attention toward the issue.⁴⁵ The tourists who were arrested for involvement or association with the uprisings were strongly reminded of these restrictions.

For the several visitors who have been to Tibet in the last ten years, it is clear that there is no true freedom of religion. A true sense of freedom would include the ability to display images of the Dalai Lama. As a monk from Drepung stated, “Reciting om mani padme hum, visiting temples, and making offering to deities are not considered real freedom of religion.”⁴⁶ Though there are no longer any posters prescribing proper etiquette for tourists, those planning visits to the country undoubtedly read of the image ban in travel books. Lonely Planet bluntly states the rule: “It is currently illegal to bring into China pictures, books, videos or speeches of or by the Dalai Lama. Moreover, you may be placing the recipient of these in danger of a fine or jail sentence from the Chinese authorities. Pictures of the Dalai Lama with the Tibetan national flag are even ‘more’ illegal.”⁴⁷

Success?

The Chinese and TAR officials apparently regard the past decade as a success, though they are still well aware of the threat posed by ‘splittists.’ A Chinese website details the benefits of programs such as the reeducation campaign citing Qamba Puncog, deputy head of the TAR Office for

Patriotism Education for Lamaseries:

Previously, many lamas lacked understanding of the reality and history of Tibetan society, an overwhelming majority of the lamas have now realized that Dalai Lama is not their spokesman, nor their spiritual leader but the head of the clique which always seeks to split up China and hinder construction of a normal order in Tibetan Buddhism or Lamaism.⁴⁸

Reports of dissidence from both individuals and monastic communities surfaced.⁴⁹ In November of 1996, World Tibet Network News reported an article titled “Artist Found Traumatized After Alleged Torture.”⁵⁰ In a chilling account, the article describes the punishment endured by artist Yungdrung. As a specialist of Dalai Lama portraiture, Yungdrung was a clear target for authorities newly persecuting those possessing images of Tenzin Gyatso. The painter was held in custody for 58 days, after which he was found barely conscious and in a state of severe shock in a public toilet near the Barkhor. According to unnamed sources, police raided the artist’s house and confiscated all of the offending paintings.⁵¹

It is impossible to ascertain the extent to which individual artists were sought after and punished. The incidents reported at the major monasteries of Lhasa—Sera, Drepung, and Ramoche—provide insight into the severity of the issue, though each community responded with different measures.⁵²

On May 7, 1996, the majority of the monks at nearby Ganden monastery chose to refuse cooperation with government officials. Rather than sign documents denouncing the Dalai Lama, these monks either returned to their villages or attempted escape through the Himalayas. Some of the monks

were arrested, though the numbers cited vary from 7 to 70.⁴⁵ There were also reports of gunfire during this incident that were perhaps the possible cause of death of two monks and numerous injuries. Only a handful, the eldest and youngest of the 500 monks from Ganden remained. Just an hour outside of Lhasa, Ganden monastery was once again deprived of its pre-Communist status as a major Tibetan Buddhist monastery.⁵³ Though Ganden was officially closed to foreigners, the Tibet issue was already prominent on the international stage.

In 1997, Washington again turned its attention to Tibetan matters when Madeleine Albright announced to congressional leaders the intention of the Clinton administration to create a specific Tibetan affairs position within the State Department. The US State Department Report on China clearly acknowledges the incidents of the preceding years.⁵⁴ Besides reporting on human rights violations, the report mentions the ban on the Dalai Lama image, and cites the use of house-to-house searches by government officials.⁵⁵ The report also details the Patriotic Re-education campaign and notes “Hundreds of officials participated in the campaign, during which monks were forced to attend sessions on law, patriotism, and support for national unity and were coerced to sign statements criticizing the Dalai Lama.”⁵⁶

Conclusion

Ten years have passed since the umbrella ban on all images of Tenzin Gyatso in Tibet. Have the Chinese authorities achieved their goal? If the objective was to lessen outward signs of independence, then it has been a success. If the goal was to stop Tibetans from unifying under

their political and religious leader, the Chinese authorities have underestimated the Tibetans.

During a recent visit to Tibet, I noted numerous instances of people surreptitiously defying the ban.⁵⁷ I spotted one monk working on a painting, and though he was initially hesitant as I approached, he quickly showed me a painting sitting next to him—a portrait of the Dalai Lama. I was allowed to enter his living quarters where another image of the Dalai Lama was displayed prominently in the center of the room. The risk involved in creating such images is obviously great. However, the importance of practicing one’s faith seems to have superseded the Chinese government’s policies. Thus, the Tibetans continue to create and possess images of the Fourteenth Dalai Lama.⁵⁸

On September 13, 2006, US Congress passed a bill awarding the Dalai Lama the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor in the nation. Across party lines, the Senate and the House supported the bill originally proposed by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Craig Thomas as well as House Representatives Ileana Ros-Lehtinen and Tom Lantos. A spokesman for China’s Foreign Ministry immediately criticized the decision, saying it “seriously interferes with China’s internal affairs and damages China-US relations.... We express our strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition.”⁵⁹

The Dalai Lama will most likely accept the medal in person during his next visit to Washington, tentatively planned for October 2007. This event is coincidentally scheduled twenty years after the first uprisings in Lhasa took place when Tibetans first learned of the Dalai Lama’s address to the Senate. Undoubtedly, the Chinese authorities will realize the significance of the date and have reinforcements

ready in Lhasa. Regardless of the potential threat, Tenzin Gyatso's message of hope and perseverance continues to thrive in the minds of many Tibetans,

awaiting a time in history when at least the photographs, if not the leader, can return.



ENDNOTES

- 1 From a November 1996 Tibet Daily newspaper as cited in the 1997 US State Department Report on China-Tibet.
- 2 Tom A. Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1996), 226. In a 1990 census, 44.43 percent of Tibetans over 15 years old and 79 percent of women of childbearing age were illiterate. Only 18.6 percent of Tibetans attended primary school, with the numbers for further educational experience reported as minimal.
- 3 Donald Lopez, *Prisoners of Shangri-La: Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 181-207. The role of the Dalai Lama in the past fifty years has been much different than any previous incarnation. As an international hero, Tenzin Gyatso is forced to make many decisions his predecessors could not have possibly foreseen; specifically, he has become a unifying force for an otherwise quite diverse population of Tibetans. The concept of 'nationality', discussed at length by Donald Lopez in *Prisoners of Shangri-La*, did not exist in Tibet. Though the Dalai Lama's role is traditionally largely spiritual (relying on the Kashag for many political decisions), Tenzin Gyatso now epitomizes a political symbol of Tibet.
- 4 There are several boundary distinctions between the cultural region referred to as 'Tibet' and the political area known as the 'Tibetan Autonomous Region.' For the purposes of this paper, I have used the terms Tibet and TAR interchangeably to emphasize the Chinese political role.
- 5 It is difficult to ascertain information regarding the popularity of the current Dalai Lama's image before the ban. Certainly, the photographs became much desired after 1996. On a recent trip to Tibet, I was often asked for an image of the leader. These requests indicate the continuing quest of Tibetans to practice their religious beliefs and possess a sense of unity with each other.
- 6 The movements known as Anti-Splittist and Strike Hard are sometimes referred to in quotation marks (i.e. "Anti-Splittist") as a reminder to the reader that the translations from Chinese differ according to source. I have omitted these marks as an attempt to further validate the phrasing of the movements.
- 7 Robert Barnett, *Lhasa: Streets with Memories* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 151. Barnett mentions an interesting theory regarding the death of Mao and rise of the Dalai Lama's popularity surmised by Chinese intellectual Wang Lixiong. Wang writes of the effective policies within Tibet as related to the living deity that Mao had become; that is to say, the Tibetans replaced one god the Dalai Lama with another. After the death of Mao, the Tibetans again turned to the Dalai Lama to fulfill this centuries-old dependence on a central figure: "Only Mao had succeeded in dissolving the religious and ethnic unity of the Tibetans, by introducing the element of class struggle. Renouncing this without creating any new ideology has left a vacuum that can only be filled by a combination of lamaist tradition and ethnic nationalism."
- 8 Ronald D. Schwartz, *Circle of Protest: Political Ritual in the Tibetan Uprising* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 14. Schwartz describes the political tension that surrounded these missions, though the specific reasons behind the success/failure of each delegation are omitted. One can surmise that the trips were deemed unsuccessful by the Chinese Party leaders, as the Party Secretary for Tibet, Ren Rong, was fired shortly thereafter.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 15. The policy as cited in Schwartz: "1. To exercise national autonomy in the region fully that is to say, to let Tibetans really be the masters of their own lives. 2. A commitment by the Central Government to relieve and reduce burdens on the people, exempting them from agricultural and animal husbandry tax over the next three to five years in order to allow the Tibetan people a chance to recover. 3. To adopt a special policy to revive the Tibetan economy, including the adoption of a system of private economy in line with Tibetan circumstances. Nationwide this initiative was developed into the economic (household) responsibility system. 4. To make great efforts to develop agriculture and animal husbandry as well as the manufacture of consumer goods, in order to promote economic prosperity and enrich people's lives. 5. To make efforts to develop Tibetan science, culture and education, and to prepare for the establishing of the University of Tibet. 6. To implement the policy on minority nationality cadres correctly, to strengthen the unity between the Han and Tibetan cadres, and to transfer a large quantity of Chinese cadres who had worked in Tibet for many years back to the interior."
- 10 Prior to 1959, the monasteries in Tibet were largely involved with political decisions. Secular and spiritual issues were not divided; hence, the role of the Dalai Lama remains a conflation of the two. The arrival of the Communist Party marked the end of monastic secular authority.
- 11 Schwartz, 7.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 8.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 186. The majority of these uprisings occurred at the Jokhang. Generally, on a pre-determined date, a group of monks from one of the nearby monasteries would peacefully circumambulate the Jokhang, gradually gaining other Tibetan protesters (many of the younger generation) as the circuit continued. Schwartz details several of these events in *Circle of Protest*.
- 14 Grunfeld, 232. The Five Point Peace Plan:
 1. Tibet to be a zone of peace
 2. An abandonment of Chinese migration to Tibet
 3. Respect for human rights and democratic freedoms
 4. Respect for the environment
 5. Negotiations on the future status of Tibet.
- 15 Allen Carlson, *Beijing's Tibet Policy: Securing Sovereignty and Legitimacy* (Washington: East-West Center, 2004), 23.
- 16 The Jokhang is the most sacred Buddhist temple in Tibet. Practitioners believe the Buddha image in this building is the Jowo statue. This most revered object was brought to Lhasa in the seventh century by the Tibetan king's Chinese wife. The Jokhang is in the center of the Barkhor—the circumambulatory path traveled by Tibetans and the location of most of the uprisings.
- 17 Schwartz, 53.
- 18 Barnett, *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, 203. Another point of contention between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese Government would arise in 1989. In January, the Panchen Lama spoke to Communist Party members in Shigatse, somewhat uncharacteristically challenging the benefits of development under Party members. Though the Panchen Lama was generally viewed as more sympathetic to the economic desires of the Chinese government, this speech may have antagonized the wrong people. Five days after his speech, the Panchen Lama unexpectedly died under dubious conditions. Six years after his death, the Panchen Lama remained a controversial figure as the Tibetan Government in Exile and Chinese authorities debated the true reincarnation.
- 19 Schwartz, 143.
- 20 It is interesting to note the tendency of the Chinese government to hold religious celebrations (again, in an attempt at partial tolerance) at the Norbulingka. The Norbulingka is generally regarded by Tibetans as the more secular of the two palaces of the Dalai Lama (the Potala being the sacred). The degree to

- which the Chinese have been successful seems irrelevant to the practitioners. Though the annual yogurt festival and official gatherings are conducted at the summer residence, it is the Jokhang that remains the heart of the city.
- 21 Barnett, *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, 239.
- 22 Schwartz, 86.
- 23 Barnett, *Resistance and Reform in Tibet*, 243.
- 24 Ibid., 251.
- 25 Grunfeld, 237.
- 26 Ibid., 238.
- 27 Carlson, 34. The end of the Cold War added additional focus to the Communist country. Ties between the Dalai Lama and Washington remained intact with the departure of George Bush and the arrival of the new Clinton administration. Upon reflection of these two years, one party official in Beijing stated: "Yes, we placed a stronger emphasis on state sovereignty over Tibet in 1991 and 1992. The rest of the world changed at this time, and it was clear to us that the US was starting to challenge China on Tibet to an extent that it hadn't since the end of CIA involvement in the region in the 1970s."
- 28 Schwartz, 58. A monk who fled Drepung in 1988 recounted the response of monks to a Chinese radio announcement against the Dalai clique: "The monks spoke against this, saying: 'It's not the Dalai clique, but Chinese beating corpses (the joke in Tibetan plays on ru tshogs =clique, but ro dzhog =beating a corpse).'"
- 29 Ibid., 37.
- 30 BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, April 30 1996 as cited in "Strike Hard' Campaign: China's Crackdown on Political Dissidents," (TCHRD) <http://www.tchrd.org/publications/topical_reports/strike_hard-2004/strike_hard-2004.pdf>
- 31 1996 Amnesty International Report as cited on "Strike Hard' Campaign," 5.
- 32 "Strike Hard Campaign," 4.
- 33 Ibid., 8.
- 34 Ibid., 24. The three major points of Strike Hard (as cited in "Strike Hard Campaign,") are 1. Forceful Crackdown 2. The Severest of Capital Punishment 3. The Swiftest of Execution. The Party Secretary of Xinjiang discussed the need for this difference in his comment to the South China Morning Post: "The Strike Hard campaign is a national campaign and different regions have a different focus depending on their local situations. In Xinjiang, Strike Hard is aimed at burglars, thieves, and those participating in violent crimes. But [we also have] the separatists, religious extremists, and terrorists. These people are conspiring to jeopardize national security."
- 35 Ibid., 27. The 'Strike Hard' campaign would actually be launched a third time, shortly after September 11, 2001. Under the guise (and actual wording) of a 'War on Terror', the Chinese government arrested Tulkhu Tenzin Delek and Lobsang Dhondrup, the first Tibetans to be labeled 'terrorists.'
- 36 Ibid., 29.
- 37 Melvyn C. Goldstein, "The Revival of Monastic Life in Drepung Monastery," in *Buddhism in Contemporary Tibet: Religious Revival and Cultural Identity*, edited by Melvyn C. Goldstein and Matthew Kapstein (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 48.
- 38 For more on US-China trade relations, see Brett C. Lippencott's "Ending the Confusion in US China Policy" April 18, 1994 <<http://www.heritage.org/Research/AsiaandthePacific/asb130.cfm>>
- 39 There are numerous images of previous incarnations of the Dalai Lama throughout Tibet, though these images are seen as strictly religious by the CCP. Images of the Dalai Lama, current or previous, were regarded as emanations of compassion, the spiritual side of the Dalai Lama's role. Though the previous incarnations served as secular leaders for several centuries, their painted images do not invoke the same sentiment as that of the current exiled leader, and thus, do not pose the threat of being a visual symbol of unification.
- 40 The operations of the Chinese government follow a pattern difficult to trace: the announcement of the ban or order is made by the official to the media, this information is related to the people through the local newspapers, and the ban or order is enforced by lower ranking officials thereafter. Though the date of this newspaper ban is debated, April 5 is cited in "Artist Found Traumatized After Alleged Torture," World Tibet Network News (TIN), November 26, 1996, <http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/1996/11/26_1.html>. In Lhasa, a Tibetan commented on the ban to a member of the Tibetan Information Network: "This act has made us feel resentful, and deep ill feeling has been surfacing amongst Tibetans here." "Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign Shifts to Schools," World Tibet Network News (TIN), May 20, 1996, <http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/1996/5/20_2.html>.
- 41 "Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign Shifts to Schools." An earlier ban of the Dalai Lama's image in schools was instated in 1986, though it seemed the photographs continued to be tolerated with no repercussions.
- 42 "China Strengthens Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign," as cited on Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy website, July 13, 2001, <<http://www.tibetanliberation.org/antidalaillamacampaign.html>>.
- 43 "Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign in Full Swing," World Tibet Network News, December 8, 1994, <http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/1994/12/8_2.html>.
- 44 "Tibet Media Urged to Expose Dalai Lama's Plots," Xizang Ribao (Chinese Government Official News Media), as cited on Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy website, November 13, 2000, <<http://www.tibetanliberation.org/antidalaillamacampaign.html>>.
- 45 Schwartz, 41. Schwartz reproduces the foreign traveler warning: "1. We extend welcome to friends from the different countries in the World who come to our region for sightseeing, tour, visit, work, trade discussion and economic cooperation. 2. Whoever comes to our region must respect our State sovereignty, abide by the laws of our country. They are not allowed to interfere in internal affairs of our country and engage in activities that are incompatible with their status. 3. Foreigners are not allowed to crowd around watching and photographing the disturbances manipulated by a few splittists, and they should not do any distorted propaganda concerning disturbances, which is not in agreement with the facts. 4. In accordance with our laws we shall mete out punishment to the trouble-makers who stir up, support, and participate in the disturbance manipulated by a few splittists."
- 46 Schwartz, 73.
- 47 Bradley Mayhew and Michael Kohn, eds., *Lonely Planet: Tibet* (May 2005), 298.
- 48 "Education Improves Lamaseries' Administration," Xinhua News Agency, June 19, 2001, <www.china.org.cn/english/Tibet>.
- 49 "Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign Shifts to Schools."
- 50 "Artist Found Traumatized After Alleged Torture."
- 51 Ibid. The article further investigates the general role of the artist by interviewing the prominent Tibetan artist Gongkar Gyatso. Though the ban was not in effect in the 1980's, Gyatso discussed his fear of offending authorities: "In 1985 or '86 when for the first time I heard a cassette (a sic) speech by His Holiness, then I got a very good feeling about him, and I thought about doing a portrait of him. But we knew it was dangerous, that maybe I would lose my job or end up in prison or something like that. I know it was quite a serious thing so I always took care not to make the government angry."
- 52 "China Strengthens Anti-Dalai Lama Campaign." The restrictions continued in 2001 with the ban of celebrations of the Dalai Lama's birthday. The commemoration, known as Trunglha Yarsol, had been celebrated for years with relatively few incidents. A circular issued by the Chinese government was distributed on June 24 2001, two weeks before the July 6 celebration. This document, titled "Strengthening Abolition of the Illegal Activities of Trunglha Yarsol Celebration and Protection of Social Stability" was undoubtedly an extension of the earlier Strike Hard Campaign. Once again, the lines blurred between political protest and 'criminal activity.'
- 53 Ganden monastery was almost completely physically destroyed in the Cultural Revolution. Most of the structures that comprise the modern Ganden monastery were rebuilt in the early 1980s.

- 54 The US State Department lists its annual human rights reports on its website: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/> However, the earliest listed report is 1999. The 1997 report is found on numerous pro-Tibetan websites, each with the same content. I have chosen to cite the version from the following web address <www.Historywiz.com/primarysources/reportonchina-tibet.htm>.
- 55 1997 US State Department Report on China-Tibet.
- 56 Carlson, 38.
- 57 For the security of the Tibetans involved, I have chosen to omit names and specific locations.
- 58 Schwartz, 21. The influx of tourists to Tibet is undoubtedly a blessing and a curse to the Chinese government. Though the economy in the region has stabilized through international dollars, the connections made between outsiders and Tibetans are of great concern to the Party. As Schwartz writes, "many Westerners visiting the region have had the experience of Tibetans slipping into their hands or pockets handwritten notes, often addressed to the United Nations. The notes typically proclaim the independence of Tibet, the oppression of the Tibetan people by Chinese invaders, and the loyalty of Tibetans to the exiled Dalai Lama."
- 59 "China Expresses 'Strong Dissatisfaction' Over Congressional Gold Medal for Dalai Lama," Associated Press, September 14, 2006, <http://www.tibet.ca/en/wtnarchive/2006/9/14_4.html>.

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SARAH GETZELMAN

Sarah J. Getzelman is currently working towards a doctoral degree in Art History at Ohio State University. She received her BA in 2001 from the University of Colorado and a subsequent MA from the University of Denver in 2005, both degrees were completed in Art History. Sarah's present research focuses on modern issues of Tibetan visual culture including Western and Chinese notions of Tibet and Tibetans, as well as the exiled Tibetan community and its perpetuation of Tibetan traditional imagery. In the summer of 2006, she worked on a photodocumentation project in Tibet under the leadership of Dr. Susan Huntington and Dr. Dina Bangdel along with other graduate students from OSU.