



TITLE:- How the dominant Chinese State power suppressed the Tibetan identity, culture and the threat to Women

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Research question

- 1. How does the People's Republic of China exercise control in Tibet?**
- 2. What is the role of history in the annexation of Tibet by China?**
- 3. How are women facing violence in Tibet?**
- 4. How does China suppress Tibetan identity and culture?**

Introduction

This research focuses on how China's expansionist policy in Asia is a threat to other religious and cultural groups or populations. Also, it highlights the atrocities against women, and the consolidation of Chinese state authority over Tibet since the annexation of Tibet by China has raised questions on gender security, state sovereignty, minority rights and the anarchic nature of the global level. The annexation of Tibet by China led to the 1959 Tibetan Uprising (Norbu, 1979). Governance in the region has mainly been taken over by the Chinese government also led the political integration, ideological control and socio-cultural transformation of the Tibetan population. Many international organisations and scholars have pointed out that the forceful incorporation of Tibet into China's territory is causing directly on Tibetan identity. The Chinese government, after the annexation of Tibet, put a transformation in Tibetan religious and cultural practices, which ultimately affected the Tibetan culture. Tibetan Buddhism, which has always been a big part of how people in Tibet organise their lives and see themselves, has come under a lot of government control. Monasteries and nunneries, in particular, have been watched closely and have had to go through regular "patriotic education" programs. The Chinese government put restrictions on religious practices, and also imposed limitations on the display of the holiness of the Dalai lama also restriction on Tibetan education and imposed Mandarin language studies (handbook, 2023).

Its also really important to think about how gender plays a role in the power of the state. Tibetan women find themselves in a tricky spot, caught between keeping their culture alive and being susceptible to political pressures. Even though they're often the ones holding things together by passing down language, customs, and religious beliefs within their families and communities. The nuns are restricted from practising the religion, and surveillance was put on the nuns and monks. The women in Tibet are forced to marry Han males for political stability, but this greatly impacts the Tibetan population. This essay makes the case that China's strong grip on Tibet isn't just one thing, but a mix of tactics. They're using political power, trying to make Tibetans adopt Chinese culture, and controlling religious practices and what happens with gender, all to change what it means to be Tibetan. Looking at how this all plays out helps us see Tibet as more than just a political event; it's a really important example of how modern governments deal with minority groups and what impact they have on women in these kinds of situations.

Research Methodology

This research is based on a combination of qualitative research and secondary sources. Data is drawn from research articles, books, and conference ideas, and historical analysis and thematic analysis are applied to analyse state power, cultural suppression and gendered experience. The methods focus on the identity transformation, religious suppression and women's lived experiences.

1. Historical Background

To understand the Chinese annexation of Tibet, we need to understand the historical context because China's claim over Tibet is based on historical times. The Tibetan people trace their history to 2000 BCE. The prominence of Tibet began under the Yarlung dynasty, with King Nytri Tsenpo and his lineage of 42 kings ruling for a thousand year on Tibetan region, also extending its prominence in Nepal and China as well. In the Tsenpo era, the idea of Bod "Greater Tibet" emerges, and the 'three dharma kings' into the 7th and 8th centuries consider as golden time, also the emergence of Tibetan script and prominent scholars like Thonmi and Sambhota. In the mid-8th century, the Tibetan army emerged as a dominant power that controlled over Samarkand, eastern Nepal, and China, paying an annual offering of 50,000 rolls of silk to the Tibetan kingdom. After the kingdom, Tibetan Buddhism played an important role in expanding its teaching across the region (Sharma, 2025). The rise of Mongols and their conquest of a vast area of China, also some part of Tibet, but the unique relation between Mongols and Tibetans as a priest-patron relationship, as Goden khan authority embraced Tibetan Buddhism, also the Ming emperors and Tibetan relations, the Lama is invited by the Ming emperor and give a honorary gift and title to lama. Later on, Phagmodru prince got an imperial invitation for a friendly visit to the Ming dynasty, also the king of Tsang had a diplomatic relation with ming and the rise of the Manchus came.

In 1642, the great fifth dalai lama became the supreme political and religious ruler of unified Tibet. Tibet is the supreme sovereign also made close relations with the Mongols and Manchus. There is a Cho-yon relationship between the Tibetan and the Manchu empire; they help in protecting Tibet from other invaders, such as the Gorkha, who attacked Tibet. Later, the rise of China and British control of India came, and then the geopolitical game changed (handbook, 2023).

1.1 Geopolitical game

The whole situation with China and Tibet, politically speaking, is all about strategy, who has the right to govern, and how power is balanced in that part of the world. Back in 1950, China took over Tibet, calling it a "liberation", but really, it was more about their own strategic interests. Because of where Tibet is located, right along the Himalayas and next to countries like India, Nepal, and Bhutan, it acts as a crucial buffer. By controlling Tibet, China can make sure its southwestern border is safe and also extend its influence into South Asia. For China, Tibet isn't just about owning the land; it's also about the resources there and keeping things secure. The area is packed with water and minerals, which are really valuable. Plus, building things like roads, railways, and military bases has given China a bigger strategic footprint. But for Tibetans, it's a fight for their culture, their freedom to rule themselves, and to be

acknowledged politically. The Tibetan government that's in exile, along with groups worldwide that support them, keep pushing back against what China is doing. Other countries are involved too, even if not directly. India sees Tibet as super important for its own border security, especially after the war in 1962 (handbook, 2023). The U.S. and other Western nations bring up human rights issues, often using Tibet as a way to put pressure on China diplomatically. Basically, Tibet is still a key spot where global politics, national pride, and competition between countries all come together.

2. Chinese Suppression of Tibetan Identity, Culture and Religion.

China's military invasion of Tibet in 1950 was strategic and systematic, restricting the Tibetan people from professing religious practices and imposing a policy that is destroying their cultural and educational freedom. Even after so many years of the Chinese acquisition of Tibet, the Tibetan people are fighting for their freedom through non-violent struggle. The biggest threat to minorities is the renewed policy of the Chinese government to consolidate the sense of a single Han national identity, which is basically the Sinicisation of Tibetan identity. The Chinese one identity policy basically disrupts the Tibetan nomads and farmers' lives and the settlement of people. Chinese leadership still fails to understand the real aspiration of the people in Tibet of dissatisfaction among the Tibetan people. Chinese education policy in Tibet aims to complete the Sinicization of Tibetan from 1985 to 2021. China enrolled over 143,000 Tibetan children. And sent these children to different Chinese provinces to learn Chinese, thereby separating them from Tibetan culture (handbook, 2023). In 2008, the Chinese government implemented the second generation of nationality policies, which strengthened Chinese identity weaken different identities.

The Chinese government has taken measures to close the private Tibetan language schools, which are closed and open new bilingual education institutes. These measures downgrade the Tibetan language. Compulsory Mandarin education for preschool children. The Chinese are violating national and international decrees and laws. The Tibetan language is not only a dialect but also preserves the Buddhist Tibetan teachings. Religion is fundamental to the Tibetan way of life because the majority of people follow the nunnery and monk life. Also, the monastic communities preserve and promote the Tibetan cultural heritage. The Chinese government or the Chinese communist party assaulted Tibetan Buddhism and forced the dismantling of Buddhist statues, 45 giant prayer wheels, and Buddhist schools were destroyed and also forced exile of the Dalai Lama from Tibet, and also politically re-education. Sinicization of religion, structural changes were made by the communist government and its policies. Monitoring monks and nuns, which impacted their right to life. The Chinese government's repression of religious freedom in Tibet is a gross violation of Article 36 of its constitution, which guarantees all citizens the right to freedom of religious beliefs (handbook, 2023).

3. Gendered dimension: Illreatment of Tibetan women.

Chinese policies in Tibet primarily focus on the gender aspect, which entails a systematic control over Tibetan women through religious suppression, social interference, and demographic policies. The suppression of Tibetan Buddhist nuns is one of the main causes of

the erosion of Tibetan identity. The Chinese government has implemented stringent regulations on religious practices, limiting the ability of nuns to adhere to their faith and uphold traditional values. The “Four Standards” policy mandates monks and nuns to uphold political integrity and loyalty towards the state, placing a higher priority on national stability over religious freedom. Consequently, individuals deemed as “model monks and nuns” are acknowledged, thereby bolstering state authority over religious institutions (cheodon, 2020). Surveillance also extends into the lives of monks and nuns, destroying the traditional monastic system of Tibetan Buddhism. In the Kham region of Tibet, institutions like Larung Gar and Yachen Gar have been instrumental in the preservation of Tibetan Buddhism following the Cultural Revolution (cheodon, 2020). These religious academies serve as important sites for Tibetan nuns to uplift their faith and empower women in addition to serving as spiritual learning spaces. Nevertheless, the involvement of the state in these institutions persists in reducing their autonomy and limiting their capacity to sustain Tibetan culture and identity.

Tibetan women continue their freedom struggle despite widespread suppression and mortal rights violations. Under Chinese rule, there are reports of forced revocation and sterilisation, reflecting intrusive population control measures. State-patronised marriages, in which Tibetan women are encouraged or impelled to marry Han Chinese settlers, further limit women’s particular choice and are frequently viewed as a form of artistic assimilation. Activists similar to Tenzin Pelsang have stressed the active part of Tibetan women in defying Chinese occupation. Numerous women involved in similar movements are locked up in jail, where they face brutal treatment, including physical violence and abuse, reflecting the severe consequences of dissent (administration, 2023).

Population programs form a pivotal dimension of this issue. China’s family planning programs intrude deeply into Tibetan society, frequently executed in a coercive and violent manner. Women are subordinated to sterilisation without consent, and families that violate birth programs face heavy financial sanctions, occasionally resulting in several times their income. In addition, access to healthcare and education may be withdrawn if there is more than one child, placing psychological, social, and cerebral pressure on Tibetan women. These programs have significant demographic counteraccusations, especially in a society where monks and nuns traditionally formed a large section of the population. Although China has shifted from a one- child to a two- child and latterly a three- child policy, the approach toward Tibetan populations remains restrictive (administration, 2023). Along with the agreement of Han Chinese populations in Tibet, these measures have affected both the population structure and the artistic fabric of Tibetan society. Lastly, the importance of both the people who remain in Tibet and those who fled to India played an important role in continuously fighting for their freedom, for their freedom struggle was also important for rising voice against the Chinese government.

4. Interview Perspective

Respondent 1 – Lobsang Dolkar (former nun, Majnu-ka-tila)

Lobsang Dolkar illustrates how the atmosphere within monasteries has shifted from spiritual dedication to continuous oversight. She asserts that religious practices have ceased to be completely personal, as teachings, symbols, and even everyday rituals are subjected to scrutiny. In her view, fear has supplanted freedom—monks and nuns are reluctant to share their beliefs in public, and silence has turned into a means of survival. She notes that younger Tibetans are maturing in a state of disconnection from their language and traditions, as education increasingly focuses on an alternative cultural paradigm. For Lobsang Dolkar, the most agonising loss is not merely the limitation on religious expression but the gradual erosion of identity itself, where culture is no longer lived authentically but instead preserved cautiously in private settings.

Respondent 2 – Yangchen Lhamo (School Teacher, former Tibetan Chinese, Majnu- ka-tila)

Yangchen Lhamo, a teacher, talks about how education has become a major place where cultural change is most obvious. She says that Mandarin is becoming more and more common in classrooms, which means that kids have fewer chances to learn and use Tibetan. As a teacher, she is torn between following the rules and keeping students' cultural identities alive. She also points out that women, especially mothers and teachers, are very important for keeping traditions alive at home, but they do so while being watched and under pressure. She says that this makes cultural preservation a private rather than public fight. Yangchen Lhamo's biggest problem is making sure that future generations still feel like they belong, even as they slowly become more like everyone else.

5. Conclusion

The Interview of Lobsang Dolkar and Yangchen Lhamo illustrate that state authority in Tibet transcends mere political dominance, influencing religion, language, and identity in daily life. Oppression is not always evident as overt violence but often manifests through subtle changes—monitoring spiritual practices, altering educational systems, and restricting cultural expressions. Concurrently, women experience particular vulnerabilities, including mental strain, societal control, and situations of humiliation or abuse that frequently go unvoiced. These gender-specific experiences exacerbate the effects of oppression, as women deal with both personal anxiety and a sense of collective duty. Consequently, Tibetan identity is not outright eliminated but gradually altered, with traditions being preserved more in private settings than in public ones. Women are essential in maintaining culture within households, even when faced with limitations. This results in a dual situation of fragility and strength. Despite the constraints, cultural identity persists through daily actions, indicating adjustment rather than extinction, while emphasising the continuing conflict between governmental power and cultural endurance.

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