

when local officials on their own instituted those changes, was to avoid retaliation. Negotiations, however, failed; the rebels returned to the struggle and Mao eventually approved socialist reforms which only exacerbated the situation leading to a much larger and widespread revolt.

Another major contribution, based largely on extensive oral histories, is the most detailed portrayal of the various Tibetan groups opposed to Chinese rule, from the plotting among the Dalai Lama's senior officials to the small group of elites and non-elites in India, to the ordinary people in Kham and central Tibet. The volume ends just as the involvement of the US Central Intelligence Agency begins although this participation, at the time, was limited to the training of six Tibetans to prepare for intelligence gathering.

On the Chinese side, thanks to an impressive collection of documents, we have a detailed history of the struggle that ensued among Chinese officials between the leadership in Beijing and the local authorities in both central and eastern Tibet over how and when to bring socialist reform to Tibet.

These Chinese documents are full of revelations which allow a far more nuanced understanding of this history than we have ever had. One interesting find was an internal Chinese document which acknowledges Tibet's *de facto* independence: "Although Tibet became an inseparable part of China long ago, it has maintained an independent or semi-independent status in its relations with the motherland" (p. 471).

While Goldstein's historical interpretations are often contested he makes his case forcefully and backs it up with formidable research. One quick example of an analysis which could be questioned has to do with Mao Zedong's motives (a subject of considerable controversy on almost every front) for his gradualist and benign policies in central Tibet. Goldstein argues they were pragmatic: "... Mao's main motivation ... [was the] ... realization that China's national interests were served best, not by replacing Tibet's anachronistic sociopolitical society as soon as possible for reasons of socialist ideological purity, but by political realism" (p. 469).

Goldstein has been collecting historical documents and oral histories of the principal players, both Chinese and Tibetan, for more than 35 years and the result is this *tour de force* of historical narrative and detailed analysis which solidifies Goldstein's position as the foremost Tibetologist.

Finally, a tip of the hat to the publishers for using footnotes. The documentation in this volume is so weighty that for scholars reading the notes, end notes would have made the book a very difficult read.

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Oral and Literary Continuities in Modern Tibetan Literature: The Inescapable Nation

LAMA JABB

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Oral and Literary Continuities in Modern Tibetan Literature is a significant milestone in modern Tibetan cultural studies. In the West, scholarship on modern Tibetan literature has only begun to seriously develop in recent years, in part because modern

Tibetan literature itself is a recent phenomenon. Tibetan writing in Chinese has received more attention from scholars in the China field, but Tibetan-language literature has largely remained accessible only to those with the ability to read it. Lama Jabb's book, which addresses itself exclusively to Tibetan-language material, thus represents a major contribution to the study of Tibetan literature and to modern Chinese cultural studies more generally.

The book consists of seven chapters, chapters one and seven being an introduction and a conclusion, respectively. In between, the author constructs a lucid and detailed argument built around the central theme that the rupture between modern Tibetan writers and their predecessors has been greatly exaggerated. Traditionally, the 1978 Third Plenum has been emphasized as the turning point when more liberal policies allowed for the flourishing of a new literature in Tibet. Lama Jabb lays out an alternative to this neat break, emphasizing instead "the persistence of Tibet's artistic past and living traditions in the creativity of the present" (p. 231). The second pillar of Lama Jabb's argument is indicated by the book's subtitle, "the inescapable nation." That is to say, the literature and other art forms investigated all reflect a core concern with preserving and perpetuating a "Tibetan national identity" (p. 2).

These contentions are meticulously demonstrated through a focus on modern Tibetan poetry, fiction and popular songs. In chapter two, popular music is read as a "public space" in which Tibetans exhibit their "common concerns and collective identity under difficult political circumstances" (p. 29). Chapter three dispels the idea that social criticism is a product of (Chinese-influenced) developments since the 1950s by setting the fiction of prominent modern authors such as Dhondup Gyal alongside a range of traditional oral and literary sources. Chapter four turns to the narration of cultural trauma, specifically the 1958 uprisings in Amdo, and traces the indebtedness of Tsering Dhondup's novel *The Red Wind Scream* (*Rlung dmar 'ur 'ur*) to oral precedents. Chapter five concerns the Third Generation of Tibetan poets. Reading against their self-characterization as radical iconoclasts, Lama Jabb instead stresses their connections to the major modern poets who came before them – and, of course, their inheritance of traditional genres such as *mgur*. Finally, chapter six addresses erotic poetry, tempering our understanding of its seemingly taboo and transgressive newness with examples of its various precedents. In each of these chapters, intellectual concern with national identity is identified as the glue that binds these literary works together.

Throughout *Oral and Literary Continuities*, Lama Jabb demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge of modern Tibetan literary texts that is, moreover, constantly complemented by wide readings in classical Tibetan literature. The breadth and depth of his reading across genres and periods is truly an exceptional feat of scholarly endeavour. Furthermore, the book is richly endowed with synopses of short stories and novels, as well as numerous excerpts of Tibetan poetry, ballads, and modern song lyrics in translation, providing the uninitiated reader with invaluable access to the material under discussion. Many of these translations, products of the author's own hand, appear here in English for the first time.

These are some of the book's many strengths. However, we encounter serious issues when it comes to the theorization of nationalism that these close readings are made to serve. For Lama Jabb, the Tibetan nation is "constituted of history, culture, language, religion, territory, shared myths and rituals, collective memories, and a common sense of belonging to a troubled land" (p. 232). Nationalism as a modern construct is dismissed as a "fashionable notion" (p. 47). This leads us to some highly problematic conclusions. For instance, the author's contention that the idea of a "Tibet" ("Bod") consisting of "Cholka-sum" (the "provinces" of U-Tsang, Amdo,

and Kham) was “etched into the Tibetan imagination and part of common parlance well before the establishment of Communist Chinese rule” (p. 43) may be valid, but to assert that this proves the existence of an enduring idea of a Tibetan “nation” is dubious. There is a tendency towards dehistoricization here, in which the existence of signifiers such as “Tibet” and “the three provinces” in old texts is presented as evidence that a *concept* has been transferred, unaltered, from distant history to the present day. For a specific refutation of this point, we might point to Gray Tuttle’s work on the shifting nature of geographical conceptions in Amdo (see Gray Tuttle, ed., *Mapping the Modern in Tibet*, IITBS, 2011).

This focus on cultural nationalism leads to the curious absence of the actual nation-state in which all of this literature was produced. The book references no Chinese sources, and connections with major Chinese and transnational literary movements (scar literature, magical realism, misty poetry) are avoided in favour of emphasizing a purely “Tibetan” heritage, giving the impression that Tibetans needed no interaction with outside sources to create the texts under discussion. This is absolutely not to say that there is a Chinese cultural hegemony over Tibetan literature, but rather than rejecting outside influence, could we not consider instead how new concepts were translated, reinterpreted and reinvented by modern Tibetan intellectuals in combination with the pre-existing cultural heritage Lama Jabb investigates so well?

Despite these significant reservations, Lama Jabb’s achievement is to be highly praised. We can only hope that his work will inspire further advances in the field, and such an assertive standpoint – always argued with clarity and an assured grasp of the material – is certain to do just that. It will be essential for inclusion in any syllabus on modern Tibetan literature, but it should prove equally vital for modern Chinese literature courses that seek to be creative and to challenge our conventional understandings of the field. For scholars and students alike, Lama Jabb’s book provides expert guidance to a world too long overlooked by mainstream Chinese literary scholarship.

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The Living Dead of the Pacific: Contested Sovereignty and Racism in Genetic Research on Taiwan Aborigines

MARK MUNSTERHJELM

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In 2010, Jiwas Ali (Kao Chin Su-mei), an indigenous member of Taiwan’s Legislative Yuan, asked the Executive Yuan to stop the exploitation of indigenous genes for the medical benefit of the Han majority. The controversy on indigenous genetic studies reveals an inconvenient truth: scientific study of indigenous genes is considered a treasure of native nationalism, but the political status of the Taiwanese aboriginals remains marginalized. With fascinating cases and theoretical discussions, Mark Munsterhjelm’s book delves into the contested subjects of scientific agenda and ethnic politics in Taiwan.

Munsterhjelm’s first two chapters outline the historical backgrounds of settler and indigenous peoples, providing an overview of indigenous people’s status under Dutch,