practitioners seeking to understand the immediate past as a tool for the present-day relationship between China and Taiwan.

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Over several decades, scholars have probed the Sino-Tibetan dispute from multiple disciplinary and conceptual angles, including history, ethnography, sociology, international law, human rights and discourse analysis. According to Tsering Topgyal, author of *China and Tibet: The Perils of Insecurity*, what has been lacking is a "security-based analysis" (p. 3) drawn from "cutting-edge IR insights" (p. 4). He writes, "one struggles to find systematic and theoretically informed scholarship on the linkage between Chinese security perceptions and policy towards Tibet, let alone one that integrates Tibetan insecurities into the framework" (p. 5). Building on foundational works by Brian Job and Mohammed Ayoob, as well as more recent contributions to security studies that among other advances give increased weight to the non-state and interstate actors that are often central to ethno-national and intra-state disputes, Topgyal conceptualizes the ongoing Sino-Tibetan conflict as an "insecurity dilemma," a "dilemmatic and dynamic interplay between the perceptions of threat by the Chinese Party-state and the feelings of insecurity of the Tibetan nation" (p. 3). Insightfully referring to China as a "strong power, weak state" (p. 15) and "an insecure empire behaving like a nation-state" (p. 12), he argues that while state repression in Tibet is a reaction to perceived threats to China's sovereignty, for Tibetans, "survival and protection of their national identity has become the core objective" (p. 90). This results in a spiralling cycle of insecurity as China "attempts to increase its security through state-building" (p. 29), thereby provoking Tibetan resistance which in turn causes even more intense state-building efforts.

Having established his theoretical framework, Topgyal devotes the remaining chapters to its vigorous defence. A short historical prologue is followed by a more effective series of chapters analysing the Sino-Tibetan dispute with a focus on the post-1989 period (after martial law was imposed following a series of "riots" in Lhasa). The first outlines the security dimensions of Chinese state policies in and about Tibet. This is followed by an investigation of "the various strategies and instruments used by the Tibetans, inside and outside Tibet, to counter the threats from Chinese policies, migration and cultural practices" (p. 89). A chapter on "the external dimension of the security dilemma" (p. 119) effectively destabilizes state-centric security analyses by demonstrating the impact international considerations and transnational actors can have on perceptions of in/security by both weak states and vulnerable communities within those states. Finally, asserting, "The insecurity dilemma provides a coherent yet inclusive framework for explaining and understanding the Tibetan and Chinese actions since 10 March 2008" (p. 151), Topgyal provides a timely examination of recent unrest (aptly referred to as an "uprising") in Tibetan regions of China.

In combination, the substantive chapters provide one of the fullest and most theoretically informed overviews of the recent history of the Sino-Tibetan dispute. Despite this theoretical sophistication, which Topgyal hopes will prove "generally applicable to other ethnic conflicts around the world" (p. 175), at times he includes claims of questionable precision, such as repeating the oft-made assertion that prior to 1949 the Dalai Lama "was the temporal and spiritual head of Tibet" (p. 87) – thereby obfuscating the existence of meaningful regional and sectarian divisions – or suggesting that the Communist Party's distrust of Tibetan Buddhism is directly linked to memory of the conversion of "the Mongol Khans and their subjects to Tibetan Buddhism" in the 13th century (p. 83). More consequentially, even while expertly documenting fundamental strategic and policy disagreements within the Tibetan exile community, and to a lesser degree within the Chinese leadership, too often "Tibet" and "China" are allowed to stand as self-evident and nearly immutable interest groups. In particular, Tibetans within China are treated as univocal (through omission "Tibetan collaborators" (p. 6) are dismissed as inconsequential) and speeches of political leaders on both sides are taken to represent broader opinions and policies. For instance, the Dalai Lama's words are used as a proxy for the thoughts of "most Tibetans inside and outside Tibet" (p. 90) while a statement by a Chinese scholar-cum-official in 2008 is presented as proof of broader Chinese designs six decades earlier (p. 55).

As *China and Tibet* contains little of an empirical nature that is entirely new, ultimately the book's reception may depend on how much weight readers attach to Topgyal's theoretical framework. Does the "insecurity dilemma" provide a mechanism to understand the Sino-Tibetan dispute in ways that traditional focuses on "ethno-nationalism," for example, do not? Or is it new language describing principles intuitively contained within other analyses? The answer may depend on the disciplinary inclinations of the reader. In any case, *China and Tibet: The Perils of Insecurity* is an important and thought-provoking addition to the fields of Tibetan, Chinese and security studies. Not only does Topgyal provide an excellent overview of the Sino-Tibetan dispute, but also provocative theoretical insights that should be welcomed in both area studies and international relations classrooms, as well as beyond.

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Contesting the Yellow Dragon: Ethnicity, Religion, and the State in the Sino-Tibetan Borderland
XIAOFEI KANG and DONALD S. SUTTON
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In the early decades of the Ming Dynasty, on what is now a vegetable patch on the western hill of the Songpan county seat, the Monastery of Great Compassion became the home of a Han Chinese Chan Buddhist monk appointed by the state to oversee local Bon and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries. This religious intermediary was expected to convert northern Sichuan's Tibetans into obedient subjects of the Ming state. Even with his temporary success, aided by the established military garrison and the enrollment of local leaders in the state's *tusi* system, the ability of the Ming to bring the region under its control was fleeting at best. By the mid-Qing